"A CRITICAL STUDY OF R. K. NARAYAN'S FICTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LOCAL COLOUR"

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PREFACE

In the present critical study I have endeavoured to highlight a critical study of R.K. Narayan's fiction and the element of local colour featuring in his works. The world of Narayan's fiction is relatively free from the terrible privations and agonies, political conflicts and economic depression. Born and brought up in South India and settled as a writer of repute in Mysore Narayan is today a vanishing breed of Indo-Anglian fiction.

In the first chapter of this study I have given a brief account of Indo_Anglian fiction and pointed out how R.K.Narayan has been writing for the last fifty years with equal courage and vitality. Among his contemporary writers it is only Narayan who has remained a full time author having no ulterior motive.

In the Second Chapter I have emphasized his contributions and brought out his evolution as a writer of serenity. He is a traditional storyteller who has remained consistent in his vision and has never endeavoured to deal with the popular mode of fiction inclusive of sex, violence, racial animosity, communalism and parochialism.

In the third chapter I have brought to light his comic genius in respect of characterization and the texture of his prose.

The fourth and fifth chapters are the heart of this thesis as they deal with the element of local colour and the hypothetical region of Malgudi. In his thirteen novels Malgudi emerges as indomitable forceenlivened with enchanting myth & reality. It is on account of the creation of this hypothetical region of Malgudi that Narayan has been able to provide the glimpse of miniature India, on one hand rooted in ancient culture of the vedas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharat, and on the other being immensely affected by the new culture of the West.

In the sixth chapter I have endeavoured to point out how R.K.Narayan has been narrating the stories of Hindu middle-class people of South India, reflecting a positive view of life and continuing Indian atmosphere in his works and descriptions.

The seventh chapter deals with his solid achievements in view of art and literature and also the national and international honours won by him. It presents a searching study of Narayan as a living author.

The eighth chapter has been devoted to the comparative study of R.K.Narayan as a regional novelist with Raja Rao, K. Nagarajan and V.S.Naipaul because Narayan's Malgudi, K.Nagarajan's Kedaram and V.S.Naipaul's Trinidad also reflect the diversified images of India side by side. Inspite of their regional and local dimensions at one level they appear to be particular places at another level they are undeniably miniature versions of a larger India. In assessment

R.K. Narayan comes out as a philosopher who has given a philosophical vision of India and has pointed out time and again that the best way for our country lies in blending the East and the West with discernment and understanding. Thus, Narayan spreads the message of synthetic philosophy like the great seers of the past who laid emphasis on unity in diversity.

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my critics.

CHAPTER - I

A Brief - Account of Indo - Anglian fiction

The two terms - 'Indo-Anglian' and Indo-English are frequently used interchangeably to designate Indian writing in English. The first term 'Indo-Anglian' stands for creative work originally written in English by Indian writers and the second. Indo-English is used only to "translations by Indians from Indian literature into English." Chalapati Rao had claimed in The Illustrated Weekly of India (May 26, 1963) that the term 'Indo-Anglian' was invented by James Cousins, and therefore, the whole credit goes to him for having designated Indian Writing in English. However, there is nothing in terms which are sometimes accepted and subsequently rejected, the most important problem is of describing accurately the complex blending of Indian and English elements within the Indo-Anglian group as a whole. Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar who popularised the term 'Indo-Anglian' by publishing his three books on the subject -Indo-Anglian Literature' (1943), 'The Indian Contribution to English Literature' (1945) and 'Indian Writing in English' (1962) has done a pioneering work to bring to light almost all Indian writers who wrote in English. Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee's 'The Twice Born fiction' has also rendered a valuable service to establish the fact that Indian fiction in English is the amalgamation of two traditions - the native and the alien, and hence in this book she favours the term Indo-Anglian to include only the writings of those who have written in English. She explains:

"I exclude all novels translated into English from the regional languages even when the translation is done by the author himself" 2

It is, therefore, clear enough that the term, 'Indo-Anglian' comprises only those who are Indian and have written in English. Since our main concern is with Indo-Anglian fiction to which R.K. Narayan belongs, we are to deal with the subject only after mentioning how this branch of literature emerged in India and grew as a result of historical and political circumstances which combined to give the educated Nineteenth Century Indian a considerable proficiency in the use of the English language. Undoubtedly, as the century wore on, the creative Indian talents turned to English literary compositions. It was just a matter of chance or an accidental concurrence of unusual environment that a few of the English knowing talents came to try their hands at creative writing.

During the last fifty years the Indo-Anglian fiction has gone ahead of poetry and other forms of literature. It is on account of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, the three pioneers of Indo-Anglian fiction that novel experiments have resulted into it. Side by side a critical evaluation

by well- organized groups and individuals - Writers

Workshop, Calcutta, Sahitya Akademi, Centre for Commonwealth Literature, Lucknow University, Gulbarga University,

Karnatak University, Dharwar, Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly,
and individuals like Dr. G.S. Balarama Gupta, Annamalai
University, Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah Dhvanyaloka, Mysore has brought to light several talented writers who are engaged
in writing fiction. Much has been done to highlight IndoAnglian fiction, yet more remains to be done ahead.

Indo-Anglian fiction does not have a long history to be delved deep into the past beyond a little more than a century. Barring certain over-simplification of details, the development of Indo-Anglian novel may be divided into three periods -

- (1) Upto 1920 the age of religious and political awakening;
- (2) 1920 to 1947 the Gandhian Era; and
- (3) 1947 onwards Independence and thereafter.

(1) Novelists upto 1920

Indo-Anglian Novel started like a toddling child.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote the first Indo-Anglian novel in 1864, entitled 'Raj Mohan's Wife'. But the novel is a 'Pastiche of the hackneyed literature of trial and injustice which was popular in England and America at the time.

.... 'Raj Mohan's Wife' at least demonstrated that Indian language (English) fiction could be written, and become a legitimate branch of Indian literature. Chatterjee's concept of the novel's function is similar to that espoused in the preface to the first American novel, 'The Power of Sympathy' (1789), which . . . was written to expose the hazardous consequences of seduction, to stress the need for female education, and to demonstrate the necessity for moral economy in the affairs of life". 3

'Raj Mohan's Wife' was followed by Raj Laxmi Devi's
'The Hindu Wife' (1876), H.Dutt's 'Bijoy Chand' (1888),
Kshetrapal Chakrabarti's 'Sarata and Hingana' (1895), Rajami
Tyre's 'Vasudeva Sastri' (1905), A. Madhaviah's 'Thillai
Govindan' (1912), S.B.Bannergea's 'Tales of Bengal' (1910),
Mrs. Ghoshal's 'Unfinished Song' and 'The Fatal Garland',
S.M. Mitra's 'Hindupore' (A peep behind the Indian unrest)
(1909), Jogendra Singh's 'Nasrin' (1915), Balkrishna's 'The
Love of Kusuma' (1910) and Cornelia Sorabji's 'Love and Life'
Behind the purdah (1909), 'Sun Babies' (1909) and 'Between
the Twilights' (1908).

All these fourteen novels and a collection of short stories (S.B.Bannergea's 'Tales of Bengal') are primarily concerned themselves "with religious basis, emancipation of women and social reform. Philosophy and propaganda dominate these novels. - - 'The Hindu Wife' of Raj Laxmi Devi and 'Sarata and Hingana' by K.Chakravarti are flimsy novels

written in a very antiquated style. Their plots are ordinary - and deserve nothing more than a passing mention.

Sir Jogendra Singh and T.Ram Krishna wrote historical romances. 'Nur-Jehan' (1909) by Sir Jogendra Singh is described by the author himself as 'the romance of the Indian queen'. Professor K.R.Srinivas Tyengar gives his balanced as well as agreeable opinion:

"Sir Jogendra Singh is a good story - teller. His novels have a considerable admixture of philosophy and propaganda, but they do not smother the human element in the stories".

T. Ramkrishna is a South Indian writer whose two romances - 'Padmini' (1903) and 'The Dive For Death' (1912) are flimsy and based on South Indian superstitions. While in the romantic story of 'Padmini' the author is concerned with the historical events, leading to the great battle of Talikote and bringing to an abrupt and disastrous close 'the history of the Never-to-be-forgotten Vijayanagar Empire', 'The Dive For Death' has a weired and haunted atmosphere full of mystery and gloom, bringing out how the poet Vijia marries Devayani after his dive for death.

s.K.Ghosh's 'One Thousand and One Night's" (1904) is important because it seems to challenge comparison with the great world classic, 'The Arabian Nights'. The sub-title of the story is 'The Trials of Narayanlal' and the story "recounts in the manner of an oriental story - teller the supernormal deeds of Narayanlal".

Professor Bhupal Singh's view is quite agreeable that:

"Indian writers and story-teller of this period (upto 1920) on the whole do not compare favourably with Anglo-Indian writers. That they write in a foreign tongue is a serious handicap in itself. Then few of them possess any knowledge of the art of fiction. They do not seem to realize that prose fiction, inspite of its freedom, is subject to definite laws. In plot- construction they are weak, and in characterization weaker still. Their leaning towards didacticism and allegory is a further obstacle to their success as novelists. As writers of short stories they have occasionally achieved success".

It is clear that the novel - the long sustained piece of prose fiction - was conspicuously absent until the nineteen - twenties. Henceforth it gradually gathered confidence and established itself in three decades.

(II) 1920 - to 1947 - Gandhian Era.

The first World War ended in 1918 but its grim carnage had shocked and stirred the conscience of the world. It was after the first World War that Mahatama Gandhi appeared on the stage of the country and inspired Indo-Anglian fiction writers to choose their subject - matter from the native scene. So far as the Indo-Anglian novel was concerned, there was hardly a sudden break from the old tradition. There was not a total

disappearance of old topics, old techniques and remote sentimental didactic novels. But the religious impulse was replaced by political fervour and a burning desire to present the predicament of the country. Themes changed and a genius like Mulk Raj Anand engaged himself to plumb the depth of humble life of the have-nots, untouchables, coolies and of those who were exploited by the privileged class. Besides Gandhi the impact of the two world wars also brought about a sense of penetrative understanding in Indo-Anglian fiction writers who enriched their works with the acute problems confornting the country. This period, therefore, produced meritorious writers like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Mul Raj Anand, D.F. Karaka, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Amir Ali, S.K. Chettur and several others whose noticeable contributions brought about the growth of Indo-Anglian novel. Professor P.P. Mehta points out about this growth.

within hailing distance of the latest nowels of the West. A village granny narrates the dynamic times of the Independence struggle in Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura' (1938). The autobiographical form of narration so useful in analysing the character is well utilized by Raja Rao. The technique here is Conradean; the grandmother in this novel takes the place of Marlow. Mulk Raj Anand used advanced technique of story_telling in all his novels, at the same time fighting the cause of the poor and the have_nots. R.K.Narayan depicted the middle class men of South India in his Malgudi novels. Karaka, Ahmad Abbas and

others with their journalistic way of writing produced effective stories which were like a blast of crisp fresh air. Mr. S.K. Chettur in his 'Bombay Murder' produced a well-turned out detective story on the lines of Agatha Christie".

All these novels show a clear-cut advance both in technique and the subject matter. The novelists of this period have displayed considerable knowledge of the technique of the novel and their thematic preoccupations are:

"Portrayal of poverty, hunger and disease; portrayal of wide-spread social evils and tensions; examination of the survivals of the past; exploration of the hybrid culture of the educated Indian middle classes; analysis of the innumerable dislocations and conflicts in a tradition - ridden society under the impact of the incipient, half-hearted industriali
2 zation".

The Indo-Anglian novelist now comes to understand the emphasis to be laid on character. He learns that it is the novelist's job, Not to describe life line by line but by the exercise of his fastidious selective power, to choose to describe only what is significant. All that would be impossible is avoided. He uses words to indicate and makes us understand what is happening in the minds of those whom he portrays.

The important novels and short stories of this period are: Venkataramani's 'Murugan the Tiller' (1927), 'Kandan the

Patriot' (1932), K. Nagarajan's 'Cold Rice' (1945), Shanker Ram's 'Children of Kauvery' and 'The Love & Dust', D.F. Karaka's 'We Never Die', Humayun Kabir's 'Men and Rivers', Sardar Jogendra Singh's 'Kamla' (1925) & 'Kamni' (1926), Mr. A.S.P. Ayyer's 'Tales of Ind', 'Indian After Dinner Stories', 'Three famous Tales', 'Jolly Old Tales', 'Sense in Sex and other stories of women', 'The Finger of Destiny and other stories', K. Nagarajan's Athawar House', 'Hari Singh Gour's 'His Only Love'.

Novels based on national struggle for freedom are:

Khwaja Ahmad Abbas's 'Inquilab', 'Kanthpura' by Raja Rao, 'Waiting

for the Mahatama' by Narayan, 'Untouchable' by Mulk Raj Anand

'We Never Die' by D.F.Karaka, 'Into The Sun' by Frieda H.Das.

R.K. Narayan also published his first four novels:

'Swami & Friends' (1935), 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937), 'The

Dark Room' (1938) and 'The English Teacher' (1945): during

this period. In his 'Waiting For the Mahatama' he presents

Gandhiji, but there is hardly any emphasis on the nationalist

struggle for independence, as we find in Raja Rao's'Kanthpura',

Abbas's 'Inquilab', and C.N. Zutshi's 'Motherland'.

Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable' (1935), 'Coolie' (1936)
'The Leaves and a Bud' (1937), 'Lament On the Death of the

Master of Arts' (1939), 'The Village' (1939), "Across the Black

Waters" (1940), 'The Sword and the sickle' (1942), 'The Big

Heart' gave a new turn to the Indo-Anglian novel, enriching

it with new technique and interesting subject-matter - protest,

reform, proletarian progressivism, untouchability, the corruption and parasitism of imperialists, capitalists, money-lenders and black-marketeers.

All the novels and collections of short stories mentioned were inspired by

'-- the struggle for independence --- Thus, they (the novelists) show sometimes technical advance and sometimes no advance. 'Kanthpura' by Raja Rao is told in a pictorial method --- technically it is a superb achievement. 'Waiting for the Mahatama' 'Inquilab', 'Untouchable' etc., also show an advanced stage in the technique of novel writing. -- 'We never Die' follows the impressionistic method of writing.

(III) 1947 Onwards - Independence and Thereafter.

This period (from 1947 to date) witnesses a great advance in technique and form of Indo-Anglian fiction. It has produced a host of fine novelists like Khushwant Singh, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Santha Rama Rau, Attia Hosain, Manohar Mulgonkar, Nayan Tara Sehgal, Balchandra Rajan, K. Nagarajan, Venu Chitale, Anita Desai, Ved Mehta, Arun Joshi, Anandlal, Dilip Kumar Roy, G.V. Dasani, C.L. Nahal and Narendrapal Singh and others who have enriched. The Indo-Anglian fiction with variegated Indian tendencies.

The Independence fiction comprises the following titles: K.A. Abbas's Tomorrow Is Ours' (1943), 'Cages of Freedom and Other Stories' (1952), 'Inquilab', (1955) and

'Maria' (1971), Lambert Mascarenhas's 'Sorrows Lies My Land' (1955), Kamala Markandaya's 'Some Inner Fury' (1955), Kushwant Singh's 'The Train to Pakistan' (1956) and 'I shall not Hear the Nightingale' (1959), Nayan Tara Sehgal's 'A Time to Be Happy' (1958), Balchandra Rajan's 'The Dark Dancer' (1959) K. Nagarajan's 'Chronicles of Kedaram' (1961) and Manohar Mulgonkar's 'A Bend in the Ganges' (1964) and Venu Chitale's 'In Transit' (1950).

Almost all the Gandhian and post Independence fiction published in English between 1947 to mid seventies reflects the Indian conditions - political, social, religious and highlights how Indian sensibility had been induced by the Gandhian Movement, the Independence struggle, imperial rule, partition, the emergence of new India and India's relations with the west and her immediate neighbours. So far as the wider spectrum of the later Indo-Anglian fiction is concerned, its growth has involved a shift of emphasis from religious aestheticism to sociopolitical concern, and the predicament of the individual under these combating traditions.

Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable' (1935), R.K. Narayan's 'Swami & Friends' (1935) and Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura' (1938) present different images of India and dawn the new age of Indo-Anglian fiction, which begins anew. Anand's stories about poverty, caste and peasantry - 'Coolie' (1936), 'The Village' (1939), 'Across the Black Waters', 'The Sword and the Sickle' (1942) initiate the beginning of a sociological trend coupled

by a compassionate indignation to be subsequently followed in a stereotyped way by the younger group of novelists. For example, Bhabani Bhattacharya's 'He Who Rides a Tiger' (1954) and S. Menon Marath's 'The Wound of Spring' (1960) deal with the burden of untouchability, echoing Anand's 'Untouchable' as the resultant range of achievement. Manohar Mulgonkar's 'The Princes' (1963) also complements Anand's picture of feudal anachronism depicted in 'The Private Life of An Indian Prince' (1953), Bhabani Bhattacharya's 'So Many Hungers' (1947) depicts the crucial experience of a Bengal famine; Kamala Markandaya's 'A Handful of Rice' (1966) is in consistent with Anand's account in 'Coolie' (1936) of the economic hardships of urban life. V.S. Naipaul, though West Indian by birth having roots in India and migrated in Britain, gives a tauntingly poor account of India in his 'An Area of Darkness' (1964) and brings out that extreme poverty is the essential part of the Indian reality. He too seems to share Anand's social trend, on the surface, but in the real sense of the term, his profound tension is effected by his own affronted humanity and a sense of compassionate outrage. The difference between Naipaul and the Indo-Anglian novelist is that the former is miserably affected by the reactions of the extreme poverty he has witnessed during his reiterated visits to India while the latter (Anand or Bhabani Bhattacharya or Kamala Markandaya) has to overcome such reactions, remaining at the same time utterly sensitive to them. The difference between the expatriate and the native sensibilities is obvious from this example. In 'So Many Hungers' Bhattacharya not only

exposes vicious inhumanity of Calcutta parasites, particularly of the get-to-rich middle-class people who are bent upon exploiting the famine and making black-market fortunes. 'So Many Hungers' does not bring about a documentary moral justice, which results in R.K. Narayan's little social fable. "Half-a Rupee Worth" about a black-market profiteer who is buried alive by the monster of his accumulated evil greed.

In addition to this socio-political trend launched by
Mulk Raj Anand to expose the existing ills in the Indian society,
there are some novelists like R.K. Narayan & Santha Rama Rao who
do not intend to analyse sociological problems. They seem to
contradict the Western idea of the ineradicability of caste as
a result of incorrigible fatalism. According to Santha Rama Rao,
there is caste of some sort in almost all societies of the world,
and that

"-- the ultimate aim of the Hindu is not happiness in the Western sense but the absence of desire". 12

Santha Rama Rao's 'Remember the House' (1956), And Lal's 'The House at Adampur'(1956), Attia Hosain's 'Sunlight on a Broken Column' (1961) and Ahmad Ali's 'Twilight in Delhi' (1940) include a further group of novels that, as studies of the transition from the old to the new India, are products of cultural nostalgia and a sentimental remembrance in varying degrees. Many writers have been prompted by the institution of marriage in order to analyse clash between tradition and modernity, of such questions as male independence and female

emancipation. In R.K. Narayan's 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937) 'The Dark Room' (1938) and 'Second Opinion' (1982), Bhabani Bhattacharya's 'Music for Mohini' (1952) and Balchandra Rajan's 'Too Long in the West' (1961) these subjects have been treated comically and with their mellowness of vein. Besides, the most important theme that has remained a centre of attraction to a number of Indo-Anglian fiction writers of this century is the East-West encounter, and it has remained, above all, the special branch of Indo-Anglian novel. Social aspects of this theme have been explored in several novels, including D.F. Karaka's 'There Lay the City' (1942), Kamala Markandaya's 'Possession' (1962), R.K. Narayan's 'The Vendor of Sweets' (1967) Arun Joshi's 'The Foreigner' (1968), 'The Strange Case of Billy Biswas' (1971) and . The Apprentice' (1974). The search for man's identity, of course; is the central aspect of the East-West theme. The ambiguity of identity finds the most sophisticated and culturally comprehensive interpretation in Raja Rao's 'The Serpent and theRope' (1960).

*R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao form a class by themselves.

Both portray an eternal India. Narayan peoples his novels with caricatures rather than characters; his Malgudi epitomises millions of Indian towns. His genius lies in pinpointing the comedy that is life. Raja Rao aims at 'fictionalizing' the Indian Spirit. "The Serpent and the Rope" is certainly the most impressive novel written about India. Its theme is —— the effects of various cultures on a sensitive Indian and his effort towards adjustment.

Indeed, the bulk of Indian fiction in English has been written basically in response to the religious and political awakening, such historical experiences as the Gandhian movement, the nationalist struggle for freedom, alien rule, partition, the emergence of the modern Indian and India's relation with the West and her immediate neighbours.

"within the wider spectrum of the Indian literary tradition, then, the growth of the modern novel has involved a shift of emphasis from religious aestheticism to sociopolitical concern." 14

The themes - their associated topics and attitudes - which have emerged so far can be epitomized as follows:

- (1) The stress on religious and political awakening which dominated the Indo-Anglian novel upto 1920.
- exposure and censure of social evils like poverty, untouchability, dehumanizing superstition, the economic and moral inequities of the caste system, parasitism of such exploiter-groups such as imperialists, capitalists, money-lenders, landlords, black-marketeers, bogus gurus, saints and spiritualists of high standard. Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Mulgonkar, Kamala Markandaya, R.K. Narayan reflect all these characteristics in their novels. Anand's novels reflect a vision of human society emerging forcefully.
 - (3) The vision of human society, socialist utopianism, and a call for the unity of the intellectual class, sense of

revolt and liberation against the prevailing traditions of the privileged class.

- (4) India as the emerging force of the modern world; her emancipation.
 - (A) India's struggle against the British rule, nonviolent force of Gandhi, the scientific humanism of Pt. Nehru, at times random terrorism and the subsequent growth of a moral historical sense;
 - (B) The tragedy of partition and discordant views between Hindu and Muslém.
 - (C) The emergence of modern India, urban and political life after freedom, and India's relation with her territorial neighbours.
 - (D) The change in society and cultural transformation.
 - (5) The East West encounters and a shift in values of the old old past of India.
 - (6) Interrogating affirmation of tradition.
 - (7) Renunciation as an ideal.

Social symbols and the living vitality of religious myth, the aesthetic and ascetic approaches to life, the operations of Dharma, Karma and Moksha, involvement and renunciation, illusion and reality, the Brahmanic consciousness and the theology of faith, the progress from Ashrama to Ashama, the ideal of the guru, and the pilgrimage to the Ganges and God have come to light through the fictional works of Indo-Anglian authors.

Despite the variegated tendencies and attitudes already mentioned, it is evident that Indo-Anglian fiction has been ramified into two chief directions : the first primarily in response to recent Indian history and socio-political problems, with a marked emphasis on human immediacy of the crisis confronting the Modern Indian and also a social realist or documentary form of expression, and the second comprising a body of fiction which is oriented to the Indian cultural tradition and delineates characters, not so much on the basis of political or social or economic representativeness, as in terms of psychologically complex and inter-connected influences of religious belief, social customs and traditional values. Mulk Raj Anand oriented the first direction, to a large extent, and it has been further explored by the succeeding fiction writers, such as Khushwant Singh, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Manohar Mulgonkar, Bhabani Bhattacharya. Kamala Markandaya and Nayan Tara Sehgal. The second direction has been represented, to a great extent, by R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Sudhin Ghose, who are not only traditional in their descriptions and delineations, but unified sensibilities in the sense that they have surpassed the divorce of the past and present which in the social protest, or scene sketching novel, sometimes results in didacticism and social cliches, or a failure to contact with the deep and perpetual sources of human experience in the universe.

Several new writers like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, C.L. Nahal, Narendra Pal Singh, have established themselves and are breaking new grounds in Indo-Anglian novel. The recent novels: show a marked advance and a shift of emphasis from impersonal to personal and social to individual yet.

"The longer lasting psychological efforts of partition have not -- been explored. -- Except for Anita Desai's novels, nowhere else in Indo-Anglian fiction do we get the feel of a metropolis like Calcutta or Bombay, where life has a rhythm or tempo so vastly different from the flow of life in the small towns or villages all over India"

These variegated tendencies - mystical, socialist and humanist - have shaped Indo-Anglian fiction. There is no doubt that this hothouse plant, as it was called at the outset, has become widely readable and has proved its worth in comparison to commonwealth fiction, engaging the attention of western critics who are showing so much interest in it:

"--- the diminished importance of England's contribution to English literature -- which has continued and will continue to diminish ever further during the present century --- a brand new English literature will be appearing in Johannesburgh or Sydney or Vancouver or Madras".

And the prophecy has proved true. Indo-Anglian fiction, though still exploratory in form, the awareness of its possibilities has made the quest itself vigorous and self-sustaining. The critical books have been written more on Indian fiction in English than on the other branches of Indian writing in English. Since Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar's book 'The Novel in Modern India' (1964) eighteen books on Indo-Anglian fiction have come out, having varied discussions on different aspects of the novel. They are as follows:

- (2) P.P. Mehta: Indo-Anglian Fiction: An Assessment(1969)
- (3) M.K. Naik: S.K. Desai: G.S. Amur: Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English: 1968.
- (4) C.D.Narasimhaiah : Fiction and the Reading Public in India : (1971).
- (5) C.D. Narasimhaiah : The Swan & the Eagle (1969).
- (6) William Walsh: A Human Idiom: 1964.
- (7) William Haden Moore: Studies in Modern Indian fiction in English: 2 Vols.: 1973.
- (8) Meenakshi Mukherjee: The Twice Born fiction (1971)
- (10) S.C. Harrex: The fire and the offering: 2 vols.:1978
- (12) Stephen Hemenway: The novel of India: 2 vols: 1975
- (14) Kai Nicholson: Social Problems in Indo-Anglian and Anglo-Indian Novel: 1972.
- (15) A. V. K. Rao: The Indo-Anglian novel and the changing Tradition: 1972.
- (16) R.S. Singh: Indian Novel in English: 1977.
- (17) K.C. Bhatnagar: Realism in Major Indo-English fiction:
- (18) Uma Parmeswaran : A study of Representative Indo-English Novelists : 1976.
- (19) Raji Narsimhan: Sensibility Under Stress: Aspects of Indo-Anglian fiction: 1976.

Despite these books individual studies on R.K.Narayan,
Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Mulgonkar, Nayan Tara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandya have come
out during the last twenty years. R.K.Narayan has been the
most popular and widely read and discussed author on whom more
than dozen books have been brought out by Indians as well as by
international literary critics of repute. It shows how IndoAnglian fiction has become one of the most popular branches of
world literature. The latest novels and short stories of R.K.
Narayan - 'Second Opinion' (1982), 'A Tiger for Malgudi' (1983)
and 'Sorry No Room' - witness that Indo-Anglian novel is

problems of the individual. There is the search for a personal meaning in life. Recent fiction has become more introspective.

R.K. Narayan's contemporary writers in Fiction

R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao are regarded the 'Trimurti' of Indo-Anglian fiction. Dr. K.C. Bhatnagar points out:

M.R. Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao (all happily alive) have by their stupend ousliterary output - each in his own way tried to correct the above glory that was Ind' stance of the West. The highest tributes and awards have been presented to them by a grateful nation; their works have been translated, prized or acclaimed in Russia, U.S.A., France and U.K. and other countries of the West. Much has been written on these novelists at home and abroad. All of them love India - 'this side of idolatory" and wish to give an "inside view" of India to the

outside world - in contrast what the Anglo-Indians attempted to do. Inspite of essential differences in their attitudes to things, we feel there is a 'common endeavour' - which will go down to posterity as a unique contribution to a crucial time of our history - to retrieve the true image of our country to serve as a corrective to the Anglo-Indian image.

Dr. K.C. Ehatnagar's views are agreeable, so far as the variegated contributions of the triad (Anand, Narayan & Raja Rao's) to Indo-Anglian fiction are concerned. They started their writing careers in the same decade of thirties - Narayan's first novel, 'Swami & Friends' came out in 1935, so did Anand's 'Untouchable' (1935) and Raja Rao's maiden novel was published in 1938. Though R.K.Narayan is still active (as the latest novel, 'A Tiger For Malgudi' (1983) and recent short stories which have been published in the Times of India indicate) and well- disciplined, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand have not added anything new to their lists of publications for the last eight years.

The younger generation of the Indo-Anglian fiction writers Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Mulgonkar, Kamala Markandaya, Khushwant Singh, K.A. Abbas, Nayan Tara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, Santa Rama Rao, Ved Mehta and C.L. Nahal - has created a beautiful spectrum through which India can be seen from several points of view. However, Narayan, Anand and Rao are major writers of Indo-Anglian fiction & it is on account of their sustaining vitality and consistency of visions (in the case of Anand and Narayan particularly) that Indo-Anglian fiction has acquired a definite place in the history of world fiction. Rao and Anand are the

immediate contemporaries of Narayan in the real sense of the term.

Mulk Raj Anand (1904 -)

Mulk Raj Anand was born in 1904 in the traditional family of coppersmith. His father turned to the army for a living and his mother came of sturdy peasant stock. Anand inherited from his father the "craftman's industry, and meticulous attention to detail, the armyman's daring zeal and the feeling for adventure, which form the stuff of his fiction.

Anand brought everything new to Indo-Anglian novel, new technique, propaganda motive, didacticism and Marx-oriented Philosophy. His education at Lahore, London and Cambridge enabled him to see the world at large and his doctorate in philosophy gave him a logical penitration to look into the lives of the underdogs and express his rage through novels and short stories of outmatching value. Anand is a versatile genius whose life and writings testify to his participation and achievement in a variety of fields - fiction, editorship, journalism, the academic profession, art, philosophy, literary criticism, oriental studies, drama, film, radio, politics, social welfare and administration. Despite alround interest, Anand's most ambitious mode of expression has been fiction. However, he is a prolific writer like Narayan, having to his credit fourteen novels, five volumes of short stories besides uncollected pieces and numerous nonfictional works. In order of publications his novels are : 'Untouchable' (1935), 'Coolie' (1936), 'Two Leaves and a Bud' (1938), 'Lament On the Death of a Master of Arts' (1939), 'The Village' (1939) 'Across the Black Waters' (1940), 'The Sword and

the Sickle 1942), 'The Big Heart' (1945), 'Seven Summers' (1951), 'Private Life of An Indian Prince' (1953), 'The Old Woman and the Cow' (1960), 'The Road' (1961), 'Death of a Hero' (1963) and 'Morning Face' (1968).

Inspite of the fact that Anand brought new matter, new technique, new style and new approach, the influence of some Indian masters of fiction cannot be overlooked. Bankim Chandra Chatterji promoted in Anand the message of social reform, Munshi Prem Chand helped him in looking into the wretchedness of the poor and the helpless. Tagore and Sarat also bestowed upon him in versatility of outlook and universality of vision. Referring to his intention as a novelist Anand remarked:

" I believe the Indian Universalist attitude enables a writer to comprehend the problem of the individual, at least symbolically from anywhere, because of the sanctions in the human centre".

Professor C. Paul Vergese expresses his views that the novelist.

"--- writing with the avowed purpose of bringing about social change and reform commits an act of transgression.

Perhaps one of the drawbacks of Mulk Raj Anand's novel arises from his concern with the amelioration of the lot of the havenots. The defect is in evidence more in his later novels. (The Old Woman and the Cow' and 'The Road') than in his earlier novels.

There is no doubt that Anand's deep concern is with the social problems and the eradication of the evils which still prevail in Indian society. But this cannot be a deplorable aim for an artist. 'Untouchable' exposes the evils of caste - system and 'Coolie' reveals the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Saros Cowasjee defends Anand that

"-- propaganda is a term given currency by the bourgeois critic, and loosely used in India to caption any work where the author's intention is plain". 20

However, Anand is a committed as well as dedicated writer whose chief aim of writing lies in the fact of teaching men to recognize fundamental principles of living so as to exercise vigilence in relation to the real enemies of freedom and socialism. He is a hard realist who chooses his heroes and heroines from the outcasts, pariahs and underdogs of the society. They are downtrodden sweepers, coolies, the unemployed coppersmiths, the debt-ridden farmers and poor simple soldiers. They live and suffer and die unwept, unhonoured and unsung. Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee points out:

"The heroes of Mulk Raj Anand are rugged individualists who suffer because they refuse to conform. Munoo the coolie, Bhakha the untouchable, Bhiku the chamar, Lal Singh of the trilogy - all are persecuted by society for their non-conformity, but all of them are indomitable in spirit". 21

Like Narayan's most of the novels of Anand have no heroines, but both these writers differ very much in their points of view and technique of the novel form. Anand uses English

language more flexibly translating punjabi words or Indian expressions into English, while Narayan seldom indulges in such exercise. Such expletives as 'Ari', 'Vay', 'hey', 'Ohe', 'acha', or words indicating mark of respect like 'Huzoor', 'Sarkar', 'Maharaj', 'Sahib' etc., and swear-words and abuses as 'illegally begotten', 'rape-mother' 'rape daughter' and 'May I rape the mother of your mother' are frequently used by Anand in his novels and short stories. In comparison to Anand, R.K. Narayan seldom uses such words and expressions. Both seem to be contradictory with each other in the matter of the use of English language for their creative purpose.

"Dr. Anand, more than any other Indo-Anglian Writer advanced the technique of the novel and the short story as a form. Consistently well- written stories and novels have been coming from his pen. The subtle style, play and interplay of character - - all these have put Dr. Anand as the foremost writer, who brought the Western technique and sense of form to perfection in his novels and short stories and put the Indian novel on the map of well- written fiction". 22

Raja Rao : (1908)

Raja Rao hails from Mysore, the same city that has produced R.K. Narayan. He was born in a traditional Brahmin family in Mysore on November 5, 1908. Having matriculated in Hyderabad, he was sent to the University of Aligarh where Professor Dickinson encouraged him in the study of french. He went to Europe at the age of twenty and researched there in

literature, first at the University of Montpellier and then at the Sorbonne under Professor Cazamian. He published his first collection of short stories, 'Javni' in 1930 in France.

Anand and R.K. Narayan, nor so prolific as Anand and Narayan are. But there is no doubt about his tremendous genius and notable contribution, not in quantity but in quality, which have ranked him among the three greatest writers of Indo-Anglian fiction. However, his novels - 'Kanthpura' (1938), 'The Cat and Shakespeare' (1966), 'The Serpent and the Rope' (1960) and 'Comrade Kirillov' (1976) - and two collections of short stories, 'Javni' (1930) mentioned already and 'The Cow of the Barricadea' (1947) - have flowed from his slow pen.

The two novels of Raja Rao - "Kanthpura" and "The Serpent and the Rope", though different to each other in purpose and scope have been widely discussed by the notable critics both at home and abroad. It is surprising to note the gap of twenty years in the publication between Kanthpura (1938) and "The Serpent and the Rope" (1960). Professor H.M. Williams points out:

"These novels make up for the lack of others in their qualitative and stylistic interest. Raja Rao's idea of a novel certainly transcends the telling of a good tale, and he may be described as the most obviously "ideological of all twentieth century Indian novelists 'ideology was a fashion and something of a fad of writing in the Nineteen thirties when socialist realism flourished in Russia and political and social realism

were strong in Europe and America too and much propaganda was mixed into the literary brew".

Professor Williams' statement bears weight when the novels of both, Anand and Raja Rao, are taken into consideration. Both of them seem to have been affected by the aforesaid fad. Raja Rao enriches his message with Indian religious and spiritual wisdom while Anand protests against the prevailing ills of Indian society.

'Kanthpura' exhibits Raja Rao's intense pre-occupation with Indian religiousness which he wants to permeate into the then Indian society at all levels, because it is a key to unlock the immense vitality latent in Indians, Undoubtedly, Raja Rao's ideological commitments are greater and deeper than the Gandhian national movement to drive the British out of India. In 'The Serpent and the Rope' (1960). Raja Rao intellectually as well as passionately examines the essence of Hinduism and how Hindu philosophy renders a formulative effect upon Indian consciousness. Professor Tyengar regards Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura' as the Ramayana and 'The Serpent and the Rope' as the Mahabharat. He explains,

If Kanthpura has a recognizable epic quality, 'The Serpent and the Rope' is more than a miniature epic. 24

Raja Rao may be affiliated with Anand and Narayan in the choice of Indian themes sometimes but his art as a novelist and his enchanting prose style are different from that of his contemporaries. However, being a roughly contemporary with Anand and

Narayana he makes with them a remarkable triad. His 'Kanthpura' and Narayan's Malgudi, offer a remarkable comparative study of Indias in miniature, because both of the locales have drawn the picture of South Indian world to which Rao and Narayan belong.

K. Nagarajan

K. Nagarajan, having been neglected for a long time like Sudhin Ghosh, is getting recognition gradually. The articles and research papers are being published on him through journals and critical books (for example Dr. G.S.Balaram Gupta's journal 'The Journal of Indian Writing in English has two articles on K.Nagarajan's 'Chronicle of Kedaram', Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee has also referred to his works in her book, 'The Twice Born Fiction').

K. Nagarajan is not a prolific writer like Anand and Narayan. He has written only two novels and a collection of short stories - 'Chronicles of Kedaram' [1961], 'Athawar House' (1963) and 'Cold Rice'and other stories' (1945).

Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee groups both R.K. Narayan and K. Nagarajan together in respect of describing the life which is known to them. Inter-cultural tension exists for them.

*R.K. Narayan and K. Nagarajan are two examples of writers who have been able to write about life as it is known to them, in their particular areas of the earth - Malgudi and Kedaram - without the need to indulge in any generalizations about what is Indian and what is Western.

In K. Nagarajan's first novel the choice of Kedaram'

(1961) "must have been influenced by Narayan's Malgudi as well
as Hardy's Wessex country and Bennet's pottery District".

However, 'Chronicles of Kedaram' is a fascinating experiment
in Indo-Anglian fiction. His second novel, 'Athawar House'

(1945) describes the vicissitudes of a Maratha joint family of
Athawar living in South India as one of its members. The
Gandhian movement of the 'twenties and the thirties' inspires
Raghunath insomuch that he plunges in it. The novel depicts the
national upsurge during the historic years between 1919 and 1934,
comprising and highlighting the non-co-operation movement and
Dandi March launched by Gandhiji. Chandra Kanta Day of Bengal
who is an ardent supporter of Gandhiji exhorts the masses of
South Indian town Gandhini to

"Adopt the creed of non-co-operation, which is the only means of our national salvation, eschew the law courts and governmented-aided schools and boycott foreign clothes for all your worth. Above all, remember the doctrine of Ahimsa and decline to have any truck with violence. Go, good men of Gandhini, fight by peaceful means and help Mother-India to come into her own". 27

Bhabani Bhattacharya

Bhabani Bhattacharya was born in 1906. He was 'Once a student in London, later a press attache' at the Indian Embassy in Washington, (and) an assistant editor of The Illustrated Weekly of India. 28 He has remained a freelance writer, travelled widely

and is a "much translated novelist". The Sahitya Akademi award to him in 1967 was a fitting recognition of his standing and achievement in the field of Indian fiction in English.

Ehabani Bhattacharya has written five novels - 'So Many Hungers' (1947), 'Music For Mohini' (1952), 'He Who Rides A Tiger' (1954), 'A Goddess Named Gold' (1960), and 'Shadow From Ladakh' (1966). Internationally honoured and widely acclaimed, Bhattacharya's novels have been translated into twenty-six languages.

In his first novel, 'So Many Hungers' (1947), published soon after the transfer of power by Britain to India and Pakistan covers the war years of agonies, cruelties, frustrations, privations and uncertainties. As the title authentically proclaims the novel unfolds the story of a horribly manmade hunger which took the toll of two million helpless hopeless and innocent men, women and children in Bengal. The novelist paints the naked horror how blacketeers, profiteers and hoarders were engaged in plying a thundering trade, authority was indifferent and apathetic, the wells of human pity had dried up, giving impetuous to jacals and vultures for jubilant and vigorous action. C.Paul Verghese's remark is agreeable that

"Food is the primary requisite of human dignity; hunger debases and dehumanises man. That is why hunger is the theme of a large Number of Indo-Anglian novels. Bhattacharya has dealt quite forcefully with the theme of hunger

and the concomitant theme of human degradation in his novels 'So Many Hungers' and 'He Who Rides A Tiger'

His second novel, 'Music For Mohini' depicts the cast distinction and poverty. India's old traditions and superstitions which menace her progress have been effectively dealt with. The third novel, 'He Who Rides A tiger' is based on ancient saying that 'He' who rides a tiger cannot dismount. His fourth novel, 'A Goddess Named Gold' is a masterly satire on those who live by the lure of gold'. The novel depicts how spontaneous kindness is sought to be prostituted for the sake of gold. The fifth novel, 'Shadow From Ladakh' deals with India's conflict with China and her response to the thundering challenge.

Bhattacharya's inheritance of sharp eye for East-West dichotomies from E.M. Forster, Anand's concern with social, economic and political problems and Narayan's comic playfulness and exaggeration - are noticeable in his novels.

Nevertheless, his main faults

use of Gandhian character and theme and lack of originality. Still, he does manage to prove as well as Anand and Narayan do that the English language novel is a fit vehicle for the Indian fiction writer. His satire is direct without being vindictive; his language is more than adequate though hardly innovative — — with more resourcefulness and experimentation and with less desire simply to satisfy the appetites of the novel — buying West, Ehattacharya may yet render his

vision of India in a more symbolic and suggestive manner."

Anand imparts deeper indictment of Indian society through his novels and short stories, Raja Rao exaggerates religious and spiritual tendencies of ancient India, Bhabani Bhattacharya follows the beaten track of Anand, and K.Nagarajan's original approach is full of susceptibility, it is undoubtedly R.K. Narayan who, by virtue of his consistency of vision, deceptive simplicity, universal humour, psychological probing, ironic detachment, and translucent prose, has dominated the Indian world of English fiction, not from the beginning of his emergence on the Indian literary map, but from sixties onwards. Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee is right in stating:

"Anand was at the height of his power in the thirties and early forties', when a sociological approach to literature was very much in vogue both in India as well as outside - - - in almost all the Indian languages, these two decades were predominently the period of public concern in literature.

The independent movement, the uplift of the downtrodden, the reform of social evils: these public occupations were followed in the next decade, by a concern with one's own self that was basically a private search. Trends in literature do not confine themselves to specific dates and years, but the shift of interest from the public to the private sphere may be regarded as a characteristic of the fifties and the sixties".

Dr. Mukherjee is right because after forties the realm of Indo-Anglian fiction has been dominated by private search,

frequently constituting a quest for a satisfactory attitude towards the West, and for the realistic image of the east so much required for emotional validity. The result is that the quest for the self has given rise to personal as well as individual problems to be solved by psychological probing.

Narayan's themes are based on the Protagonist's quest for identity, a typical aesthetic pattern, in keeping with certain philosophic - cultural assumptions, which are the bed-rock of his socio-religious inheritance and psycho-moral ambience.

Life and Works of R.K. Narayan.

Birth and parentage - As it is customary in the South to use the name of one's village and that of one's father before one's name R.K. Marayan's full name is Rasipuram (in the district of Salem in Tamil Nadu) Krishnaswami Tyre (his father's name). Narayanaswami (his own name). R.K. Narayan has cutshort even Narayana-swami, and uses only Narayan. Though Narayan's family belonged originally to Rasipuram, it had shifted long before his birth to Madras. It was in Madras that this great pioneer of Indo-Anglian fiction was born in 1905. Soon after Narayan's birth his father got a job of a headmaster at Government High School Channapatna, situated fifty-nine kilometres from Bangalore on the way to Mysore. Channapatna deserves a special mention because it was here that Mr. Narayan himself got a job as a teacher in the same Government High School, where he could not stay more than five days. While other brothers and sisters of Narayan lived with their parents, he passed his childhood with his material

grandmother and his uncle, who influenced him tremendously.

Education: Narayan was educated at Lutheran Mission School,
Madras, Government High School Channapatna and Maharaja College,
Mysore. The novelist failed both in High School and Intermediate examinations and could get his degree only when he
was twenty-four. But it does not mean that he had no inclination or aptitude for learning. The reasons were not far to
seek as he himself points out about his mental abstractions.

"doubts". How could I tell the teacher, after he had lectured to us a whole morning, that I existed under a whole cloud of unknowing. My trouble was absolute abstraction from my surroundings. My mind was busy elsewhere - watching through the large windows the cows grazing the field".

Next to religion, education was given due importance as the most compulsive force in Narayan's family. But his outlook on education never fitted with the accepted code at home. Narayan tells us:

" I instinctively rejected both education and examinations with their unwarranted seriousness and esoteric suggestions. Since revolt was unpractical, I went through it all without conviction, enthusiasm, or any sort of distinction.

Going to school seemed to be a never - ending nuisance." 35

It will surprise the enthusiastic reader of Narayan's fiction that this stalwart of Indo-Anglian fiction failed in

English in the University entrance examination when he decided to enter the University for B. A.

"I had failed where I was most confident - English".

And his father, inspite of his strict attitude in school matters, was endowed with one very pleasant quality - that he never bothered about the examination results. He was in the habit of always displaying sympathy for a fallen candidate. But even he was constrained to exclaim in surprise.

"Stupid fellow, you have failed in English Why?".

Narayan was opposed to the system of being prescribed a set of books by the soulless body of textbook prescribers. He tells how his natural aversion to academic education was further strengthened when he read an essay by Tagore on education, which pointed out:

"The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. But we find that this education of sympathy is not only systematically ignored in schools but it is severely repressed. — the greatest of educations for which we came prepared is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead".

Anyhow Narayan attained his belated graduation in 1930 from Maharaja's College, Mysore. At first he toyed with the idea of studying for an M.A. degree in literature and thus

becoming a college lecturer. But his friend advised him not to do so as this would be a sure way to lose interest in literature. He accepted his advice and repudiated the idea once for all, turning his back on college studies.

Practical Life: Passion For Writing.

After having obtained his belated graduation (with History, Economics and Political Science and literature). life became full of problems to Narayan. It was inconceivable for him to stay at home without some office to attend after graduation. His father was insistent that Narayan should meet his friends and seek their help for an appointment in the railways or in the bank. Narayan tried to meet these friends but in vain. They proved fair - weather friends and instead of becoming of any help they proved nuisance, to young man of Narayan's calibre. In the meantime his father, who was the only supporting-hand for a family of a dozen members, retired from service. It had meant all sorts of re-adjustments at home. Having nothing to do in Mysore and dreaming himself to be a writer. Narayan moved off to Bangalore and stayed with his grandmother, back again under her care after many years' interval. It was here that he translated his dream of becoming a writer into a reality, and wrote the first line of his maiden novel, 'Swami & Friends' to be published in 1935. How it all happened is interestingly described by Warayan in his memoir:

"On a certain day in September, selected by my grandmother for its auspiciousness, I bought an exercise book and wrote the first line of a novel; as I sat in a room nibbling my pen and wondering what to write, Malgudi with its railway station swam into view, all ready-made, with a character called Swaminathan running down the plateform, peering into the faces of passengers, and orimacing at a bearded face. .*38

This was a satisfactory beginning for Narayan, and he regularly wrote a few pages each day. He had already written a play called "Prince Yazid" 'the story of an independent - minded Mughal Prince who was tortured and tormented by his father'. But it was returned to him after several decades from the office of his literary agent, David Higham, who had discovered it among the destroyable papers. It shows that Narayan's ambition, as early as his school days, had always been to become a writer. His father did not like this idea that an Indian could become a successful writer in English. Therefore, he advised him to become a teacher and continue to write simultaneously.

Meanwhile, Narayan received a government order appointing him as a teacher at a Government High School in the same Chennapatna where he had studied as a schoolboy and made "grasshopper collections". But he failed to adjust here. He had no patience and tact to tackle problems with the headmaster and the students as well. He decided to return to Mysore and concentrate fully on completing his first novel, 'Swami & Friends'.

Love-Marriage and short-lived Happiness:

The most important event took place in 1933 when Narayan

met his future wife Rajam in Coimbatore. Then our novelist
was a romantic youth falling in 'love with all and sundry 39
all one-sided ofcourse'. But this time his would-be wife
impressed him so much that he immediately fell in love with
her. She was about eighteen, tall and slim and had classical
features; her face had the finish and perfection of sculpture.

Despite the rigid tradition that any talk for a marriage
proposal should proceed between the elders of families, Narayan
got acquainted with his father-in-law and made a bold and
blunt announcement of his affection for his daughter. After
a lot of fuss over the matching of horoscopes, fluctuations
and hurdles, Narayan was married in 1934. He has referred
to this personal experience in a number of novels (The Bachelor
of Arts', 'The English Teacher', 'The Financial Expert'
authentically have references of horoscopic battle).

The marriage was a happy one, but short lived. A number of women - characters in Narayan's novels bear close resemblance to his wife's character and personality, and Sushila the heroine of 'The English Teacher' is Mrs. Rajam's replica. Narayan's daughter, Hema appears as Lila in the same novel. It was during this period of short-lived happiness that Narayan fast rose in importance as a novelist and published his three novels in quick succession - 'Swami & Friends' (1935), 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937) and 'The Dark Room' (1938). They brought him wide popularity, money and professional happiness. Graham Greene became his champion from the outset and wrote prefaces to his novels, as there were no opportunities for publications.

The Irreparable Loss : Suffering : Deliverance.

This happiness ended in the great loss. His beloved wife died of typhoid in 1939, the same black year which brought forth the second world war. Hema Narayan, the only sign of their married life and the apple of their eyes, was hardly two years then. The novelist has depicted the similar experience in his fourth novel, 'The English Teacher' (1945). Narayan himself points out:

"The loss of my wife was sudden and not remotely anticipated by me - although my father-in-law had his doubts while looking into my horoscope earlier. But now I had to accept her death as a fact. - - Perhaps death may not be the end of everything as it seems- personality may have other strutures and other plains of existence, and the decay of physical body through disease or semility may mean nothing more than a change of vehicle. This outlook may be unscientific, but it helped me survive the death of my wife - - - I could somehow manage to live after her death and eventually, also attain a philosophical understanding".

But this sudden death of his wife proved a shattering as well as a rewarding experience for the novelist who not only passed through the valley of the shadow of death but also plunged himself into the eastasy of life after death. Whether anyone believes or not, the metaphysical experience which Narayan has depicted in 'The English Teacher' was his own experience, as he points out in his memoir:

"Psychic experience seemed to have become a part of
my normal life and thought. In a few months I became an adept

--- I could catch telepathic message or transmit my
thoughts to others; and I could generally sense what was
coming ahead or anticipate what someone would say -- following the directions given, I practised psychic contacts regularly for some years, almost everynight. I found it possible to
abstract from my physical body (a process taught by Paul
Brunton) and experience a strange sense of deliverance. And
then gradually the interest diminished when I began to feel
satisfied that I had attained an understanding of life and
death".

change in his career and helped him to produce more artistic fiction which brought him on the forefront of Indo-Anglian fiction. He wrote his fourth novel, 'The English Teacher' published in 1944 by Eyre and Spottiswood, where Graham Greene was now director. Though there was the rage of the Second World War, and the paper shortage had disrupted the publishing world, Graham Green had managed to find the quota of paper for an edition of 3800 copies. The book has been in print ever since. Narayan's third novel, 'The Dark Room' was published in 1938 and 'The English Teacher' in 1944, but during the gap of six years he edited a journal 'The Indian Thought' and published three volumes of short stories - 'Malgudi Days' (1941), 'Dodu and Other Stories' (1943) and Gyclone and other stories' (1944).

Since the publication of 'The English Teacher' in 1944. Narayan became a regular contributor to Indo-Anglian fiction. He had a more mature vision now than before. Since then novels have flowed from his pen in quick succession, in order of one book every two years : 'An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories' was published in 1947; 'Mr. Sampath' in 1949; 'The Financial Expert' in 1952; 'Waiting for the Mahatama' in 1955; 'Lawley Road'in 1956, 'The Guide' in 1958, 'Lawley Road'in 1958, 'Lawley Road'in 1956, 'The Guide' in 1958, 'Lawley Road'in 1958, 'Lawley Road'in 1956, 'Lawley Sunday' in 1960, My Dateless Diary' in 1963; 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' in 1962; 'Gods, Demons and Others' in 1965; 'The Vendor of Sweets' in 1967; 'A Horse and Two Goats' in 1970; 'The Ramayana' (1972); 'My Days' 1974; 'The painter of Sions' in 1977; 'The Reluctant Guru' in ; 'The Mahabharat' in 1980; 'Second Opinion' in 1982 (searialized in 'The Illustrated Weekly of India - January - February 1982); and 'A Tiger For Malgudi' in 1983. Mr. Narayan has written twenty-six books so far. Thirteen of them are novels, six collections of short stories, a version of the Ramayana based not on Valmiki, but Kamban (the Tamil poet), 'The Mahabharat', and ' 'Gods, Demons and Others' are based on Indian classical literature. 'Next Sunday' is a collection of sketches and essays, and 'The Reluctant Guru' is a record of Narayan's visit to America as a visiting professor. The whole writing-career of Mr. Marayan todate covers (the) period of fifty years. What a wonderful vitality and stamina have been displayed by this stalwart of Indian background. Purity, patience, perseverance and love are the four essentials to success, as told by Swami Vivekanand, and R.K. Narayan seems to have integrated them in his personality by all means.

Mention of Narayan's important novels and short stories.

In order of publication Narayan has written thirteen novels and six collections of short stories among which the following are important because they signify different aspects of life on which the novelist confined his focus of attention:

They are:

'Swami & Friends' (1935) is the maiden attempt of
Narayan based on a series of episodes, escapades and adventures
of Swami and his companions. This novel is primarily important
because Narayan introduces in it the ramshackle sort of town
called Malgudi, which develops as a region in the subsequent
novels and short stories insomuch that it has now become a
reality charged with all that is intimate & poignant, in
human life.

The protagonist, Swami, and his companions, Albert Mission, School, Board High School, M.C.C. (Malgudi Cricket Club), the river Sarayu, Groves and Streets - all are introduced one by one to frame the picture of Malgudian world in the mind of the reader. The novelist looks at the world from his protagonist's viewpoint. The action begins and Narayan's ironic humour is diffused in the boastful lecture of the fanatical scripture teacher. The novel is a bitter - sweet tale of Swami who is transmigrated into the protagonists of subsequent novels - Chandran, Krishnan, Srinivas, Margayya, Natraj, Ramap, Sambu and Tiger - Hermit appear to be the development of this loveable boy. And he is the replica of the novelist.

After 'Swami and Friends' Narayan wrote 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937). The Dard Room' (1938) and 'The English Teacher' which form the first group of his novels. It is really 'The English Teacher' which is not only a mature work but an exquisite record of Narayan's own tragic experience he had undergone after the sudden and cruel demise of his wife. In 'The Bachelor of Arts' we find the reflection of romantic vouth of uncertain nature tossed with the idea that life should be freed from 'distracting illusions and hysterics'. He does so and seeks refuge in parental love and surrenders to the old values of life. Chandran, the protagonist of the novel appears to be another Swami with a marked potential for the uncommon. 'The Dark Room' (1938) is a lament on the disharmony of domestic life. Savitri is the heroine of the novel. She is tormented by her husband Ramani who is not as poetic and idealistic as Krishnan in 'The English Teacher'. Nor Savitri is as divine and rhythmic as the heroine of 'The English Teacher! Sushila is. Instead of utilizing and exploiting herfeminineart for the sake of domestic happiness she is in the habit of sulking in her dark room too often, especially when her husband Ramani is cross with her. She is further tormented by her husband who carries an open love affair with his probationer colleague, Shanta Bai, a divorcee from Mangalore. Tension springs from the untoward event. Savitri abandons home and husband, tries to commit suicide, is saved by a burglar from Sukkur village, and taken to a village where with the help of Mari and Ponni she is able to be employed in a temple as a sweeper.

Her conscience forces her to return to her husband and children Willy Milly. A part of her personality is dead because she is not yet certain whether her husband has got rid of Shantabai or not. She feels happy to resume her domestic duties on a conviction that life is in its major part a tale of tears and it is far better to accept it as it is.

Professor A. N. Kaul considers this novel "weak and insignificant novel - - that brings out Narayan's failures, for Narayan has written anti-domestic novel and written it badly". Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah expresses the similar views:

"One may without loss ship the intervening "Dark Room", which for all its pathos develops melodramatically and has a didacting ending. It is probably the only novel in which Narayan has introduced sex overtly, something that would embarrass his admirers, more so, in view of the illicit relationship that occupies a considerable part of the novel".

The novelist is a free person to develop his story according to the requirement of the subject. Narayan tried to make a bold experiment with the serious-comic novel, and when he found the reluctance of his readers and reviewers in regard to the total dependence of a housewife on her husband, he did not repeat the same in his subsequent novels. It shows how adaptable Narayan is according to the demands of his admirers.

The second group of novels - 'Mr. Sampath' (1949),

'The Financial Expert' (1952), 'Waiting For the Mahatama' (1955)

and 'The Guide' (1958) - shows a marked advance in the creative

genius of Narayan. He is no longer a novelist of the school
boys, graduates and teachers but a mature and elegant delineator of

the money-hunting men of the hypothetical world of Malgudi. These

novels bring out Narayan's development as an artist and we enter

into a period of the 'Novels of experience'.

'Mr. Sampath' and 'The Financial Expert' bring out a very similar construction. The central theme of both novels is 'the interminable sequence of events related to attachment and the wheel of existence. Such a sequence is highlighted in 'The Bhagawad Gita' - thinking about sense objects is bound to attach man to sense objects. If he is attached, he shall be addicted; if addition is thwarted, it is bound to give rise to anger; if he becomes angry, he will certainly confuse his mind. And confused mind will make him forget the lesson of experience. This forgetfulness will result in the unaccountable loss of discrimination. If discrimination is lost, life's only purpose is missed altogether.

Both Sampath and Margayya are obsessed with the ideas of woman and money. The former breaks away from the normal code of family and the latter considers money as the only source of power to deal with the affairs of the world. Sampath shirks from his duty of a printer and gets lost in the vortex of film-producing so as to bewilder Srinivas and close the journal

'The Banner'. Margayya becomes extraordinary and abandons his job of a moneylender to peasants and embarks on a tempting mission of a publisher of 'The Science of Material Happiness'. He comes under the influence of Dr. Pal who is the real author of 'The Science of Marital Happiness'. Both Sampath and Margayya are sadder at last and are forced by circumstances to return to normalcy and accept life as it is.

'The Guide' won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1960 and was converted into a successful film. Narayan introduces a triangle of love and lust in this novel - Raju - Rosie - and Marco, and depicts a three - dimensional character in Raju for the first time. Raju, the central character of this novel also leaves his duty as a shopkeeper of books, becomes a guide, impresario of dance, a saint, and dies as a martyr. His involvement with Rosie results into a jail-journey for two years, similarly his setting-up as a sort of ascetic brings about his death as a martyr.

"Technically, 'The Guide' is an advance on the earlier novels: the present and the past are cunningly jumbled to produce an impression of suspense and anticipation".

Dr. S.C.Harrex considers 'The Guide' as a guide to
Narayan's art as a novelist. This novel shot Narayan'into great
prominence to the extent that he became a by-word to the world
of novel readers and the general public.

The last group of his novels comprises 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' (1962), 'The Vendor of Sweets' (1965), 'The Painter

of Signs' (1977), 'Second Opinion' (1982) and 'A Tiger For Malgudi' (1983).

In 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' Narayan depicts a tough character, Vasu, H, M.A. who is a taxidermist and a constant source of trouble to the old and peaceful world of Malgudi. Natraj is as unlike Vasu as the hind is unlike the panther. Malgudi continues to be the scene of whole action of the protagonists who fret and toil in the turmoil of life and at last get rid of the evil - incarnate Vasu. There is a galaxy of minor characters in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' : Sen, the Nehru-baiting journalist, 'the adjournment lawyer' who is ever involved in extorting money from his clients for every adjournment. The Sanskrit scholar Sastri who is endowed with readymade quotation for every occasion is a rare product of Narayan's creative genius, resembling Enobarbus of 'Antony & Cleopatra', in the matter of sharpening wit. The poet who celebrates the marriage of Radha and Krishna in his memorable book, 'Radha' Kalyan', Rangi the seductive temple dancer who tempts Vasu and becomes his paramour, Muthu, the tea-stall-keeper who remarks to Natraj "If people are not slaves (to their wives) before sixty, they become slaves after sixty", the forest ranger of the Mempi forest introduced to Natraj by Vasu and who has a book ready for publication, "Book of Golden Thoughts", and the bus-conductor - at first insulting Natraj for being ticketless and then relenting at hearing that he may have a Morris to sell - all are loveable and realistic people of different varieties. The breakdown of joint-family system is

also described to have affected human relations of the middle class people of South India.

Professor P.S. Sundaram regards this novel as Narayan's greatest work'. Undoubtedly "This novel is a perfect piece of workmanship but has a few minor defects which strike at once. For example, the situations are slightly exaggerated for the sake of humour. The waste paper sale takes half-a-day. Even in the leisurely Indian life half-a-day is an exaggeration, Similarly, Vasu's behaviour, and the manner in which it is tolerated by others are not convincing".

Similarly, the death of Vasu is also far from convincing.

Despite a few minor unconvincing details the 'Man-Easter of Malgudi' can be called a 'Well-turned out Novel'.

'The Painter of Signs' again introduces the enchanting town, Malgudi, nay, now city. Raman is depicted as a painter of signs who develops his relation with Daisy, the arch-priestess of family - planning. Raman is modest and accomodating with everyone. Raman and Daisy remind us of another romantic pair of Sriram and Bharati appearing in 'Waiting for the Mahatama', though in different circumstances. The unhappy ending is reminiscent of Narayan's other novels - 'The Dark Rook',

'The Financial Expert', 'The Vendor of Sweets' and 'The Guide'.

His love for tragic endings in novels was nurtured by his reading of western classics as he points out in his memoir, 'My Days'.:

"I loved tragic ending in novels. I looked for books 46 that would leave me crushed at the end."

"Second Opinion" was serialized in The Illustrated
Weekly of India (Jan. Feb., 1982). The theme of renunciation is the
largest issue of the story of Sambu and his mother who are poles
apart in every matter, and particularly choosing a bride. Sambu
is a selfcentred individual like other heroes of Narayan's
previous novels. He is afraid of losing his own identity if he
surrenders to the will of his mother. Thus he refuses to marry
a girl of his mother's choice and wants to remain unmarried
instead of becoming a henpecked husband doing all the feminine
cores. At last, he obeys his mother at least in coing to
receive the bride's father on the station of Malgudi and showing a sign of respect to the old. Individual and society and
philosophies of detachment and renunciation remain to be the
main points of interest in this novel.

The latest novel of Narayan 'A Tiger for Malgudi' (1983) brings out the novelist at the altitude of his genius as a creative artist. The novel is based on the fable of of 'The Tiger and the Hermit' about which Narayan came to read in the newspaper. Having already the background of the story in his mind Narayan brought out this compelling fable of Raja, the ferocious tiger which develops like a human being and becomes an awakened soul. He greets the reader on thevery first page and subsequently tells him the whole story of his development to a living soul within his forbidden exterior. He tells:

"-- I possess a soul -- can think, analyse, judge, remember and do everything you do, perhaps with great subtlety and sense. I lack only the faculty of speech." (P.12).

There is tiger - Hermit who not only saves Raja from the outrageous growd of Malgudi, bent upon to kill im, but also transforms his inner being. It appears that R.K. Narayan who has depicted objective as well as dramatic characters in his fiction emphathises himself with Raja:

"--- I have no reckoning of time -- I could only measure it by my own condition -- most of my old associates missing, perhaps dead -- most of my teeth had fallen -- so good-buy for the present". (P.176)

The novelist aged seventy-eight years seems to reflect himself thus.

Still an active contributor, Narayan is in the workshop. We may still hope to read his fourteenth novel, subsequently flowing from his quick pen.

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CHAPTER - II

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R. K. Narayan's Contribution to Indo -Anglian Fiction

Every Writer is known to the public by his notable contribution to the realm of writing. R.K. Narayan, like his closest contemporary Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, is a prolific writer who has contributed thirteen novels, three major collections of short stories, three versions of Indian religious classics (The Ramayana and the Mahabharat), a traveloque, a memoir, and two books of essays to Indo-Anglian literature during his long writing career of fifty years. He is 'one of the most respected novelist at present writing in the British Commonwealth', as William Walsh points out:

"Over a period of fifty years of composition he has built-up a devoted readership throughout the world from New York to Moscow - - - His writing is a distinctive blend of Western techniques and Eastern material, and he has succeeded in a remarkable way in making an Indian sensibility at home in English art".

Professor K.R. Srinivas Tyengar also has a high admiration for Narayan 'who is that rare thing in India today, a man of letters pure and simple'.

When Narayan appeared on the Indian literary scene, he had one confessed doctrinal resolve 'to attack the tyranny of love and see if life could offer other values than the inevitable Man-Woman relationship to a writer." Undoubtedly, he

has remained consistent in his vision. Sex, violence, racial enmity, communalism and parochialism have got no place in his fiction. Inspite of the fact that he deals only with the middle class people of South India with whom he is well acquainted being a member of this class, he is far away from provincialism. He is a writer fully committed to Indian spiritual values and ideas, with which Indians are basically familiar, and his moral as well as psychological analysis of individual's personality, his comic irony, are all in consistent with his essential moral vision and religious sensibility. His novels and short stories are essentially Indian, as Ved Mehta points out:

"... his books . . have the ring of true India in them. He had succeeded where his peers had failed, and this without relying on Anglicised Indians or British caricature to people his novels".

It was the period of the nationalist Movement for freedom which inspired several Indo-Anglian writers to confine their attention to the acute problem of the country and write political fiction. Therefore, the Indian literary scene was dominated by the nationalist agitation, Gandhian influence and patriotic fervour to drive the British out. R.K. Narayan himself remarks: ". . . the mood of comedy, the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, the crisis in the individual soul and its resolution, and above all the detached observation, which constitute the stuff of fiction, were forced into the background."

Thus it was Mr. Narayan who appeared on the Indo-Anglian literary scene and gave a new turn to the novel proper and confined his attention to the problems and predicament of the individual. Almost all his novels are composed of the stuff for which he pleaded in his article in the Atlantic Monthly. He had a rich background of going through the works of great masters of English literature like Sir Walter Scott. Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, Arnold Bennet, Richard Haggard, Marie Corelli, Moliere, Alexander Pope. Marlowe and Shakespeare. His constant reading of the current journals which his father's school-library could provide him also helped him in forming a vision, an outlook which steered him in the selection of his subject matter. Narayan is firmly rooted in religion and family, and that is why the restoration of the family and that of religion are the main problems in his fiction to be faced by the individual in his progress to normalcy. Acute observation, wit and gentle irony helped to establish his place in the realm of Indo-Anglian fiction.

Narayan brought to Indo-Anglian fiction the novel of 'local colour'. In it he uses a thin thread of plot to connect a series of descriptions in which the natural seenery of a South Indian locality represented by his well-known Malgudi, and the salient features of this middle class community, are faithfully drawn. His novels have a value of their own irrespective of the fact that they appear somewhat in the relationship of the photograph to the painting.

Narayan is the practitioner of the serious comedy, which is not only a difficult art form but also requires a balanced view to be dealt with. His novels are the comedies of sadness. This sadness springs from the painful experience of dismantling the routine self. The comedy arises from bumbling, desperate attempt and absurd approaches applied by the protagonists in the exploration of different experience in search of a new but exquisitely an inappropriate role. It is not difficult to discover that the complex theme of Narayan's serious comedies the rebirth of self and the process of its pregnancy or education. As human life on this earth is neither a tragedy nor a comedy but the mingled web of the two, so are Narayan's novels in which the gay and the serious, the tragic and the comic very often lie close together. Smile comes through tears.

Narayan is a great humanist whose chief aim is to entertain his readers. His ironical humour is not a device but a way of life through which he explores the oddities and idiosyncracies of his protagonists' behaviour. He uses mild satire also but it is kindly and tolerant, except at occasions when he satirises outsiders who have disturbed the silent pools of Malgudi. In "Mr. Sampath" he satirises with some bitterness the 'Zani film industry', the capitalists and financiers, the hypocritical nature of Sampath. Like that of Shakespeare, Narayan's humour is of immense variety; it is all pervasive - humour of character, humour of situation, humour of farce, wit, irony.

Like Jane Austen Narayan achieves perfection by recognizing the limitations of his range and keeping within Belonging to the South Indian middle class and knowing it intimately, he draws almost all his characters from this class. From Swaminathan of 'Swami & Friends (1935) to the hermit - Master of 'A Tiger For Malgudi' (1983) there is a beautiful picture - gallery of immortal characters. Ramani & Sampath, Margayya & Raju, Natraj and Vasu, Jagan and Sambu all hail from the middleclass of South India, but they are almost all drawn with a convincing psychological consistency, providing to them life and vitality. His novels and short stories, seldom vehecles of mass propaganda, also delineate the breakdown of the feudal society and confine attention to the changed ideas in conformity with the family as a unit and perpetual struggle between old and new, But as the deeper study reveals the chief concern of the novelist lies in the analysis of the character of the individual in his course through life. There is a constant search for the revelation of the individual's identity. From 'The English Teacher' (1944) Narayan begins to question as to what is man, or fate or destiny or free-will or freedom and just after forty years the answer comes out in 'A Tiger For Malgudi' that man is the maker of his own destiny and it is in his personal choice to attain free-will or freedom. Stripping aside the garb of belonging to the whole humanity in general and external self in particular, man is a living soul, a wonderful creation of the Almighty, noble in reason, infinite in faculties, the 'beauty of the world' and a hidden angel in himself. The Master who saves the tiger- Raja and behaves like a divine person -- answers all questions which the protagonists of Narayan's earlier novels raise in the courses of their lives.

Inspite of his mixed cultural background Narayan is a detached artist, convincingly impartial and psychologically profound. His sympathy is with the human being who suffers partly on account of his own human weaknesses and partly because of conditions and circumstances in which he is placed by the cycle of birth in a universal order. This point becomes more clear in Narayan's latest novel, 'A Tiger For Malgudi' which throws a great deal of light on the universal order of the Universe and the wheel of existence, between which not only man but also a ferocious animal like the tiger swings.

Narayan's Malgudi like Raja Rao's Kanthpura, K.

Nagarajan's Kedaram, V.S. Naipaul's Trinidad, Wordsworth's
Lake Districts, Arnold Bennet's Pottery Towns, appears to be
a living region. This region continues to figure in thirteen
novels and eighty-four stories and appears to be 'the only
hero', as Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar agreeably suggests,
having 'the soul'. Everything else changes in this mortal
world: human beings try to live and they, after a certain
time, called upon to die: Names change, there is a change
of fashions, modes and behaviour, but Malgudi perpetuates from
time immemorial. What a wonderful interplay between illusion
and reality is presented by Narayan. It is the spirit of
Malgudi who saves its people whenever they are tormented by
the evil doers. 'The Man - Eater of Malgudi' reveals this
fact as Vasu, the bully is ultimately overpowered by the

spirit to strike his forehead when trapping the mosquitoes.

He has proved unbearable to the Malgudian society and disturbed the normal order. The world of animals has also been ravished by him. But the spirit of the town seems to bear him no more. The temple elephant, Kumar is saved and vasu dies like a mythological demon Mahishasur, because every demon within him, unknown to himself, has got some seed of destruction, and therefore, he cannot always remain invincible. Otherwise what will heppen to the rest of humanity?

In Narayan's fiction there is reflection of beauty through characterization, locale, comic and tragic devices which he applies to perceive beauty and distinguishes it from ugliness of human behaviour. Almost all his chief characters at last come to the realization of truth of life which exists in the maintenance of order, descendence on the normal plane and a sense of belonging to others, to the unknown, governing the whole universe. Graham Greene aptly reveals that Narayan's "Characters .. on the last page vanish into life".

Narayan's art of novel differs from the contemporary practitioners of commonwealth fiction. He has got his own originality, individuality, and intellectuality to perceive the truth, beauty and love, which he finds being reflected in human beings, even in wild beasts, animals and birds.

There is a mirage of perfection which the discerning reader can be able to perceive. Narayan is indispensable because he is a pioneer of Indo-Anglian fiction; he is indispensable because his sensibility is without any stress of influence of

others; he is essential because he portrays eternal India with a considerable justification to initiate that normalcy lies in the integration of all good points scattered in the East and the West. Yet it is too good to be deep-rooted in Indian Hindu culture which is based on the principles of Truth, Love and Beauty, forbearance, magnanimity of heart, refinement of soul. selflessness, detachment and renunciation. In this way Narayan's art is reformative far from being revolutionary. Santha Rama Rao who admires Narayan's art of fiction and comprises a group with him, is right in her affirmation that the ultimate aim of the Hindu is not happiness in the western sense but the absence of desire . Narayan's presentation of the Hindu faith is very much in conformity with what Santha Rama Rao affirms. Narayan's rising popularity is the result of his devoted service to the cause of Indo-Anglian fiction which has surpassed the British fiction of this period and has found a place in the annals of world fiction. His great contribution to the development of Indo-Anglian fiction would remain indispensable for centuries to come.

His Evolution As A Writer of Fiction.

First Phase - There is no doubt that Narayan earned prominence with the publication of his first novel, 'Swami & Friends', but a writer of maturity was born in him with the passage of time. The first phase of his writing career begins from 1935 and ends in 1945, and during this period he published four novels - Swami & Friends (1935), 'The Bachelor of Arts' [1937], 'The Dark Room' (1938), and 'The English Teacher' (1944). All these novels

are preliminary attempts to transcend to higher plane and this plane was achieved after the end of the First World War. There is a gap of around six years between the publications of 'The Dark Room' and 'The English Teacher'. This gap was caused by the sudden demise of Narayan's wife whom he has portrayed in 'The English Teacher' as Sushila, and has shown her to have come back to the hero, Krishnan. He has recorded this experience in his memoir and has described how impassionately he was able to 'manage to live after her death, and eventually, attain a philosophical understanding".

This understanding, that death cannot be the end of everything as it seems and the decay of the physical body through disease or senility may mean nothing more than a change of vehicle, helped Narayan in plumbing the depth of his own heart. His search for greater truth of human life was intensified further after the end of the first phase. He became objective in his approach and by dint of Non-attachment and renunciation he was able to invent more significant characters and situations to enrich his fiction. Now he was no longer interested in writing about school and colleges, teachers and the taughts. But it is interesting to note that Narayan could not altogether detach himself from his old matter. For example, Sampath, the protagonist of the novel, 'The Printer of Malgudi', seems to have been developed on the line of the loveable eccentric, Kailas who appears for a while in 'The Bachelor of Arts', and Srinivas of the same novel also has his prototype in Swami, Chandran and Krishnan.

Second Phase: The second phase of Narayan's brilliant career begins after the independence, with the publication of his fifth novel. 'The Printer of Malgudi' (1948) and ends with the coming cout of 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' (1962). It was during this period that Narayan grew in importance and wrote more interesting novels and short stories which brought him great name and fame both at home and abroad. It was a period of freedom and peace in India because the Britishers had been shunted off once and for all ffrom the country . Narayan's rising success had also resulted into happiness and peace. The tragedy of his wife's death had now descended to the bottom of his heart and he had started turning from the inward to the outward with the intention to present an objective observation of life in his novels and short stories. In 'The Printer of Malgudi' (1949) this new change can be envisaged in the balanced and comprehensive view of all humanity which is perceived by Srinivas. And Srinivas is the protagonist with whom the novelist identifies himself and reveals his philosophy of life in this universe :

"His mind perceived a balance of power in human relation—ships. He marvelled at the invisible forces of the universe which maintained this subtle balance in all matters ——— If one could only get a comprehensive view of all humanity, one would get a correct view of the world: things being neither particularly wrong nor right, but just balancing themselves". 10

This balanced view with all its comprehensiveness and universality evinces a tremendous advancement in Narayan's vision, a mature way to look at things of the world with disinterestedness

and passivity. His knowledge of human nature, about its different aspects, began to grow discerningly. The reason for this perceptive change was that Narayan was trying to cut himself aloof from all bitter influences of the past, and his growing sense of detachment was sharpening his instrument of expression so convincingly that he was able to produce interesting novels concentrating on the hard-boiled money - hunting men of the world, during the second phase of his career.

The first reward of this growingly broad - outlook was 'Mr. Sampath' the novel of a loveable roque'. This period from 1946 to 1962 was so fertile that Narayan produced masterpieces of fiction. 'The Financial Expert' (1952). 'Waiting For the Mahatama' (1955). 'The Guide' (1958) and 'The Man Eater of Malgudi' (1962), 'Astrologer's Day and Other Stories' (1947) and 'Lawley Road' (1956) elevated Narayan at the climax of his glory. De became famous all over the world of readers. 'Mr. Sampath' caught the attention of the Indian film producers, and a popular Hindi film was produced in 1952. Motilal, a renowned actor of his times, played the role of Mr. Sampath. Narayan's growing popularity in India and England cought the attention of the American reading public that also seem to constitute the largest segment of Narayan's foreign admirers. He was first introduced to the United States by the Michigan State University Press. During 1953-55 the press had published his five novels -'The Financial Expert'. 'The English Teacher', by another name 'Grateful to Life & Death', 'Swami & Friends', 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'Mr. Sampath' as 'The Printer of Malgudi'. These novels 'were extremely well received by the critics'.

In 1956 Narayan got the invitation from the Rockefeller foundation to visit America as a visiting Professor.

"It was not only his first visit to that country but his
first trip outside India". This visit proved a means of
varied experience "as the happy novelist now spent the winter
of 1956 and most of the following spring in America, meeting
most of the world - renowned personalities, from Aldus Huxley
to Greta Garbo. It was here that Narayan wrote his most
interesting and award - giving novel, "The Guide" within
three months. It was published by the Viking Press in 1958,
and was made into a film in 1964. It also brought to him
Indian Sahitya Akademi Award, the country's highest literary
honour. At the zenith of his fame and contentment, Narayan
had now become the novelist of the public both at home and
abroad.

Which he had aspired for since his college days, and looked into the deeper meaning of life. He read Hindu mythology and deduced that 'life is a perpetual struggle between the forces of good and evil'. The result was 'The Man Eater of Malgudi' in which Narayan considerably exploits some of the principles which make the classical myths what they are. The destruction of evil and the inevitable triumph of good, the law of Karma form the major themes of both 'The Guide' and 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi'. He himself explains how classical myths are relevant to modern life:

"With the impact of modern literature we began to look at our gods, demons and sages, as not some remote concoctions but as types and symbols possessing psychological validity, even the seen against the contemporary background".

Third Phase: After the resounding success of 'The Guide' both as a novel and the film Narayan contemplated to write something of abiding value and the three versions of classical epics - The Ramayana and the Mahabharat - engaged his attention most. 'Gods, Demons and Others' (1965), 'The Ramayana' based on Kamban (the Tamil poet) and the 'Mahabharat' can be read as much interestingly as his novels.

'From the publication of 'The Vendor of Sweets' (1969) onward Narayan grew deeper and deeper and concentrated on the principles of non-attachment and renunciation. In 'The Vendor of Sweets' the principles of non-attachment and renunciation form the main basis of the plot of the story, but the experiment is in the preliminary state. The protagonist of the novel. Jagan, the sweet-vendor is not able to renounce the whole of his worldly possessions. In his next novel, 'The Painter of Sign' the principles of non-attachment and renunciation are applied more relevantly in the persons of Raman and Daisy who are poles apart in their views towards the world in general but convincingly identical in their perceptive understanding of the principles of non-attachment and renunciation. 'Second Opinion' (1982) the hero Sambu and his dominating mother are also poles apart in almost all worldly matters except the bond of love. The theme of renunciation does not grow deeper

than it was expected to be. But the latest novel, 'A Tiger For Malgudi' indicates the finest possible treatment given to the principles of renunciation and non-attachment. The art of the novel is finely ameliorated in accordance with the requirement of the matter of passivity which the novelist exploits subtly to reach the altitude of the Hindu view of life in the most convincing manner. It is certainly the expression of the subtle experience of Narayan woven in the fabric of the stery so intensively that the deeper meaning - of Indian asceticism is conveyed through the genuine 'Tiger Hermit' who employs his supernatural powers to save the tiger and bring about its inward transformation. Eight kinds of supernatural powers - invisibility of being, levitation, transmutation of metals, travel in space, control over animals or men, living on air, on water and all kinds of control over the elements - had already attracted the novelist's attention as early as 1942 when he met Paul Brunton who came to India to study Indian philosophy and mysticism. Narayan points out in his memoir. 'My Days' :

"When I met him I found him a genuine person. I found that many of his experiences, which had sounded improbable, were true. . . under the guidance of certain practitioners of the esoteric arts in Egypt, he had attained mastery over deadly serpents, scorpions and wild animals, the power to view the past and future and various miraculous and magical powers of not much value in one's evolution". 14

But Narayan soon realized that the attainment of such powers would not help in his evolution. He, being a writer

pure and simple, believed in the stillness of the restless mind so as to understand the real self of his being, and reflect it through his protagonists.

The latest short stories of Narayan published in 'The Times of India' from time to time reveal the deeper vision of the novelist who is now at the acme of his powers of wisdom. The story, 'Sorry, No Room' seems to be a sequal to 'A Tiger for Malgudi'. The superb treatment of the supernatural powers — control over the tiger in 'A Tiger of Malgudi' and living on air in 'Sorry, No Room' — indicate how Narayan has reached the altitude of spirituality. It is all on account of his dedi—cation and discerning understanding of the power of the self that he has been raising the question 'who am I ? which has remained a persistent research of both the scientist and the philosopher in this era, in relation to their existence in this universe *

Therefore, it is clear that the art of fiction has been fully utilized by Narayan to present his point of view before the world of readers, concurrently providing aesthetic delight by means of simple translucent prose, everyday humour, and a grand message to control the restless mind for realizing the hidden power of the self or being in this human body.

The three phases of Narayan's writing career insinuate how he has developed himself as the finest writer of Indo-Anglian fiction. There is a grand personality behind his fiction, and this personality is deep-rooted in Indian culture

through which the best points and principles of the Western culture are discerned for looking at the total reality of the individual in society.

Popular Appeal of His Novels and Short Stories.

Universality of appeal is the touchstone of greatness in literature. Literature, as a culture of ideas, aims at universality of appeal, and if it is parochial in tone, it ceases to be a great literature. All the novels which have become classics have universality of appeal, and thus, they are not the property of one province and the country in which they were written by the greater minds of mankind, but they claim to have invited a wider reading public outside.

Professor P.S. Sundaram points out in his critical book 'R.K.Narayan', that 'Readability is the supreme test for a novelist' and R.K.Narayan's novels and short stories 'are eminently readable'. Narayan uses simple words to convey the meaning clearly. Since his subject matter is concerned with the common men who try to become uncommon, returning at last to their former state, Narayan avoids high-sounding and bombastic words which have little concern with the requirement. Clarity of language and expression depends very much on the clarity of ideas of the man, and Narayan is unquestionably clear in his ideas. His chief aim is to delight his readers, and this delight is the result of stories which he narrates through the medium of a simple language. Like Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao he also writes about India, but unlike them he is not an

experimenter in the field of English language. He chooses the conventional idiom of the people and characteries purity and simplicity to his diction, in his novels as well short stories. As Narayan finds no difficulty in handling the English language, the language of his novels and short stories poses no problem to his readers. This quality indicates a direct outcome of the author's attitude towards English language. In his interview with William Walsh he says:

"Until you mentioned another tongue I never had any idea that I was writing in another tongue. My whole education has been in English from the primary school, and most of my reading has been in the English language. . . I am particularly fond of the language. I was never aware that I was using a different, a foreign language when I wrote in English because it came to me very easily. I can't explain how. English is a very adaptable language. And it is so transparent it can take on the tint of any country."

There is hardly any striving after effect in Narayan language. He uses small sentences to convey his meaning and seldom beats about the bush. His tight grip is on the subject - matter immediately and the object of his description is at once introduced at length. William Walsh's views are agreeable:

"The modesty, candour and the workmanlike air . . so characteristic of Narayan the man, are also the marks of Narayan the writer." Expression follows character, manner.

temperament. In particular the cool clarity with which Narayan considers himself, . . so in the novels the limpid quality of the felling is the result of the calm and unsurprised scrutiny. 17

There is certainly Gandhian simplicity in Narayan's manner of expression. He is an accomplished writer with a deceptively effortless narative style. But his simplicity is deceptive because there are sparks of wisdom below the surface, and when the reader enters the world of his fiction he would have no idea about such wisdom at the outset. It is the end, the resultant of his fiction, which is more meaningful and significant than the beginning and the middle.

Narayan avoids both the victorian high-polished literary prose and verse rhythm and English public school slang in his novels and short stories. His Malgudians are pedestrians mostly; the novelist himself must have a jaunt on foot everyday of four to five miles. His style, therefore has a pedestrian quality.

Dr. K.C.Bhatnagar agreeably points out that:

"Narayan's style is not like the vigorous, sensational, colourful style of Manohar Mulgankar who presents to us situations which are melodramatic, even macabre. Narayan's diction, his sentence - structure, his syntax - present no problem to a lay-reader. He avoids all journalistic, telegraphic or 'poetic' mode of Narration. His entire effort is directed to imparting the speech-rhythms of the middle class people of Malgudi. In this effort he is eminently successful".

There is no doubt that Narayan's language seldom obtrudes; it neither detracts from nor adds to his qualification as an artist. It is because of his reluctance to experiment with the nuances of language which causes some gaps and unsatisfactory moments. For instance in 'The English Teacher' the protagonist of the novel, Krishnan says that his father is *fastidious and precise in handling the English language, though with a very slight pomposity". (P.18), but there is hardly any revelation in the language of the novel. In 'The Guide' also the abusive language of Raju's schoolmaster is never demonstrated; a tame allusion is given to his description that the oldman was one "who habitually addressed his pupils as donkeys and traced their genealogy on either side with throughness". (P.24). Inspite of several scenes of ancer in his novels and short stories, the strongest curse is 'you earthworm' ('The Financial Expert' P.15). Vasu in 'The Man - Eater of Malgudi presumably speaks with an American style picked up from 'crimebooks and films' (P.30), but the sole indications are but an occasional "wise guy" (P.17), "Yeah" (P.30), or 'eh' (P. 30).

But these are small weaknesses. Narayan's love for English language has remained supreme, because he does not write in his mother-tongue, Tamil. At the outset of his writing career, he must have also pondered over a problem of the medium of expression which baffles Jagan in 'The Vendor of Sweets' : "He wanted to know which language his son's Muses accepted, whether Tamil or English. If he wrote in Tamil he would be recognized at home; if in English, he would be known in other

Professor P.S. Sundaram takes a tolerant view of Narayan's English which is like a best used tool in his hand. If one has learnt it by heart and has a good luck to -- 'master it at an impressionable age, one should use it.

As the writer is much more than the language, Narayan's zest for life and all its creatures, his modesty, his irony, his universal sense of humour, the complete absence of pomposity and pretence, acceptance of life despite its irrationalities and broadness of outlook with scriptural detachment are the qualities of his fiction which have brought about authenticity and all round popularity both at home and abroad. He is the most popular and widely - known fiction writer of India. He has created immortal characters like Raju, Margayya, Vasu. Ramani, Kailas, Marco, Rosie, Sushila, Daisy, Raman, tiger-Raja, the hermit-master who echo in the memory long after they have been read in the fictional stories of Malgudi. The wonderful creation of the hypothetical town of Malgudi is a magnificent contribution of Narayan to Indo-Anglian fiction. Inspite of his popular as well as universal appeal he is throughly Indian in the selection of his themes. He renders the Indian sensibility in a western art form. His art is a curious amalgamation of western method and eastern material. He presents a full circle, indeed in the noblest tradition of Hindu philosophy - "in my beginning is my end; in my end is my beginning".

Both reason and imagination find their pabulum in Narayan's fiction. It has been pointed out by literary critics that life is a comedy to those who think and tragedy to those

who feel, and, no doubt, Narayan's fiction doesnot arouse feelings but it certainly tickles the reader's imagination and induces him to look into himself with a reformative motive and develop a sense of belonging to the whole humanity. He has some qualities of Rabindranath Tagore in his character, and his personality is endowed with universality of vision.

That is why, Narayan has the admiration of eminent men of letters for writing realistic fiction. Graham Greene, E.M. Forster, Somerset Maugham, Elizabeth Bowen, Henry Miller, Compton Mackenzie, Anthony West, John Updike, V.S. Naipaul — all have high admiration for his fiction. No other Indi—Anglian novelist is more reputed than Narayan both in the creative and the critical literary circles of the world. It is all due to the presentation of illusion and reality lying side by side, reflecting the truth of life, the truth which Narayan's penetrative eye may perceive in the lives of the South Indian middle class people. Narayan aims at the individual man who typicalizes the man in Indian society and explores his nature with details at length so as to arrive at the logical conclusion.

V.S. Naipaul criticizes Narayan for his aimlessness:

The virtue of Narayan are Indian failings magically transmuted. I say this without disrespect . . . He seems for ever headed for that 'aimlessness' of Indian fiction'.

but he admires his

". . . honesty, his sense of humour and above all . . his attitude to total acceptance. . . . the India of Narayan's

novels is not the India the visitor sees. He tells an Indian truth".

As Walter Allen points out that there is hardly any doubt that different novelists have different theories about their art, the basic fact of resemblance cannot be denied that most important to everything else is

". . . the obsession to create character and story which 20 can only artificially be separated from an image of life".

And Narayan's novels agreeably concentrate on these elements. He is a comedian, but a serious comedian, who knows fully well that in this period of changing values the individual mind should maintain balance, to accommodate himself in the existing conditions. He presents the study of the individual mind which is at a loss to avoid wayside temptations. When these temptations turn into obsessions they not only deprive the person of enjoying a peaceful life, but also bring about his downfall. He projects the image of Indian life which he knows very well. What happens to his characters may happen to almost all individuals who start the journey of life without planning. Being a contemplative writer. Narayan serves the world in detachment from it. If he depicts Indian failings sincerely, it cannot be called his aimlessness. His aim is more or less reformatory. far from being revolutionary. He seems to insinuate that the fault does not lie in the world and the society but in the individual mind which is obsessed with any type of idea money or ambition or love or any inanimate object. When the

individual mind is illusioned by the nation that the person is going to become extraordinary, and the reverse happens at last, he is enlightened spiritually. This happens to almost every protagonist of Narayan novels.

It is Narayan's popular appeal which has brought him in the line of front-rank novelists of the world. He, on account of his universal vision, large humanity, detached view and everyday humour and psychological insight, is able to win the attention of the large - reading public of the world. His two novels - 'Mr. Sampath' and 'The Guide' which were converted into successful films have justified how dramatically interesting writer he is, with a view to giving a cinematographic picture of life.

As a Story - Teller

Story - telling aspect is the primary characteristic of Narayan's art of novel. He is a story-teller first and foremost. There is no denying the fact that the basis of the novel is a story which is a 'narrative of events artistically arranged in a time sequence'. Narayan's novels are slender and straightforward, tragi - comic in tone, telling the stories of middle class people of South India who are troubled by the problems of marriage money and tangles of human ties. Narayan tells stories with simple and straightforward clean English using traditional idiom of the people. As style is the man, Narayan is very simple and unaffected, so is his language. Readability

"... is for Narayan the supreme test for a novelist."

21

His own novels are eminently readable".

Narayan is a traditional story teller as he points out in his following comments he made in 1953:

"All imaginative writing in India had its origin in

'The Ramayana and the Mahabharat' . . An author would pick up
an incident or a character out of one or the other and create a
new work with it".

In his'God, Demons and Others' Narayan gives a relevantly convincing description of a village story-teller who has really no doubt about the originality and authenticity of the vedas. They contain within them all that is needed for man's salvation at every level. Every story that the narrator tells has in it a philosophical and moral significance and an understanding to distinguish between good and evil. Narayan's stories are also philosophical and have moral significance. Being a moral analyst and the penetrative observer of human nature, Narayan has a firm belief that 'everything is bound to come out right at last'. The result may be delayed for a long time and the simple humanity may suffer, but there is no doubt about the ultimate triumph of good over evil. It may be for sometime that the

"... strong man of evil continues to be reckless until he is destroyed by the tempo of his own misdeeds. Evil has in it, buried subtly, the infallible seed of its own destruction". 22

The difference between the ancient story-teller and

Narayan is that the latter avoids in his stories the 'didactic interludes' which are so common and hackneyed in classical stories, 'Narayan's are written 'Out of the impact of life and persons around him. But he applies the classical tradition in his serious and comic focuses. Two examples from his novels and short stories can serve as illustration: 'The Man - Eater of Malgudi' and 'Half-a-Rupee Worth' from Lawley Road:

In 'The Man - Eater of Malgudi' Vasu, the taxidermist, is worked out in terms of classical model. He is a terror to the whole community of Malgudi. Narayan points out in his 'Gods, Demons and Others' that the demons 'undertake intense penance acquire strange and unlimited powers and harass mankind and goodgodkind alike until a redeemer appears and puts them out. "(P.8). Vasu is a giant of man and his intense penance consists of a row of self-control as not to use his enormous physical strength indiscriminately. He is a modern version in the true demoniac tradition in the sense that he exercises the demoniac power of death over life. His death brings about a regeneration of Malgudian mankind. "Half-a-Rupee Worth" also has a clearly contrived 'moral significance' because Subbiah with an all consuming greed is himself consumed by it. He is a wealthy rice merchant whose greedy nature persuades him to hoard grain in order to amass colossal profits during the period of shortage and inflated prices. He declares that rice is not virtually procurable. The starving poor are forced to pay exorbitant prices. His death is ironically important as he dies when a pile of rice bags fell upon him and crushed him

beyond recognition while he is engaged in fetching from his secret supply half-a-rupee worth of rice for a desperate customer. The story presents a moral in accordance with the well-quoted saying of the classical tradition that 'Evil has in it, buried subtly, the infallible seed of its own destruction'.

Inspite of his detachment and objectivity in the treatment of his subject-matter, Narayan indirectly pleads for cultural integrity. He is deep-rooted in Hindu religion and family as he points out in his interview with Ved Mehta:

"To be a good writer anywhere you must have roots - both in religion and family. I have these things". 23

With all these beliefs and commonsense Narayan tells the stories of the South Indian people with whose psychology he is well-acquainted. He writes with complete objectivity, quaintly blending humour and irony and sympathetically laying his finger on the idiosyncracies and angularities of his characters. His little town Malgudi forms the locale of all his thirteen novels and eighty-four short stories which present members of the south Indian middleclass engaged in an unavoidable struggle (Quale Medison) 24 to extricate themselves from the automosphero the past.

Since the action of Narayan's novel is centred in the mythical town of Malgudi, much attention is bestowed on topographical details. If all his novels are read in their chronological order, the sagacious reader is not only well—acquainted with the landmarks of Malgudi but also is well—informed about the improvement which has taken place over this town in course of time.

Narayan uses the most simple form of prose fiction and his story records a succession of events. Plot and character are inseparably knit together. The qualities which are attributed to these characters become instrumental in determining the the action and the action in turn progressively transforms the characters so that the story could be carried forward to the end. Being a good story-teller and believing in a systematic handling of the story he divides it in a beginning, a middle and an end. The end of his movel brings about a solution of the problem which has set the event moving. The end sounds a completeness in itself so much so that there is herdly any possibility for the movement and progress of the action beyond it. The end very often brings about a balance of forces and counterforces, or death or both. For instance, Raju in 'The Guide dies at laet, Vasu in 'The Man Eater of Malgudi' is also killed by his own fist; the death of the former results into the happiness of the villagers of Mangal who have been awaiting the rains helplessly and the demise of the latter brings about the restoration of normalcy and peace in Malgudi. It is. therefore, clear that Narayan's novels admirably possess all good qualities which are attributed to a good novel by Somerset Maugham:

not give that, it is worthless . . . It should have a widely interesting theme . . the story should be coherent and persuasive; it should have a beginning, a middle and an end, and the end should be the natural consequence of the beginning. The episodes should have the probability and should not only develop

the theme, but grow out of the story. The creatures of the novelist's invention should be observed with individuality, and their actions proceed from their characters". 25

The technique of Narayan's narrative is simple and straightforward. He has published thirteen novels during the period of forty-eight years (his first novel, 'Swami & Friends' was published in 1935 and the latest 'A Tiger For Malgudi' in 1983. In all these thirteen nogels he was both subjective and objective modes of narrative. His first three novels -'Swami & Friends' (1935), 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937) and 'The Dark Room' - are traditional and conventional in regard to the objective mode of narrative. Narayan is the omniscient author writing in the third person in 'Swami & Friends', 'The Bachelor of Arts', 'Mr . Sampath', 'The Financial Expert', 'Waiting for the Mahatama', 'The Man Eater of Malgudi' and 'The Vendor of Sweets', and 'The Dark Room'. In 'The English Teacher' he uses the first person and emphathises with the protagonist Krishnan. In this way, the hero becomes the narrator himself. This subjective technique is in accordance with the demand of the purpose and effect of narration. The story deals with a difficult theme of psychical contact with the spirit : Krishnan establishes this contact with the spirit of his degeased wife and it brings about a psychological change in the protagonist and enables him to solve other worldly problems. In 'The Guide' also Narayan deviates from the traditional mode of narration; part of the story is told by him and the remaining part in the first person by the hero himself. Narayan certainly improved the technique of narration in 'The Guide' because it was necessiated

by the nature of the story. The novel begins with the release of the hero, Raju, from the central jail in Malgudi. The author tells the life of Raju after his release from Jail while the hero narrates his life, before he was imprisoned, in a series of flashbacks and eventually in a form of confession to valen who has mistakenly regarded him as a saint. This double narrative technique helps in making the figure of the hero more sharp and effective and real than the rest of the important characters in the novel. The development in Raju's character is brought about by certain events which in turn change his personality and hasten him to forget his outer self. He accepts the role of a saint willy nilly and goes on fasting in order to propitiate rain for the droubt-affected area of Malgudi town. His enlightenment is in response to the expectations of a crowd of villagers who are not only his admirers but also worshippers in the real sense of the term. Therefore, it is obvious from this example that character and action develop concurrently and influence each other in the process. .

In 'The Man Eater of Malgudi the technique of the first person narrative is successfully used. Narayan emphathizes with Natraj, the printer, through whom he conveys the essentially Indian conception of life - "dharma protects those who protect dharma and dharma destroys those who try to destroy dharma". Vasu, the taxidermist and a terror to Malgudians, is absolutely against this dharma. He tries to destroy it and is himself destroyed in the process. Therefore, the technique of first person narrative is used in accordance with the

requirement of the nature of the story. The same technique has also been applied in the latest novels of Narayan - Second opinion (1982), and 'A Tiger For Malgudi' (1983).

The characters of Sambu and Raja are developed by a series of events, which in turn change their personalities. Raja, the hero of 'A Tiger For Malgudi' is not a human being, but a tiger who passes through a series of events, as do the other protagonists of Narayan's novels, and eventually explores the pathway to enlightenment. 'A Tiger For Malgudi' is a haunting tale, uniqually combining the elusive timeless quality of Hindu legend with the universal comic vision of the author.

Inspite of Narayan's affinity to a typically Indian tradition of story-telling, he gives an indirect message to his reader. He is perchance a 'moral-analyst', but seldom imposes his views on his reader. Through his stories he analyses the individual feelings, emotions and actions and tries to explore the latent human conflicts. He seldom aims at preaching and pontificating. Narayan is, undoubtedly, the traditional Indian story - teller, but he adopted his form and style from the west.

Narayan relies on his very minute observations and subtle ironic and harmonious way of story - telling. It sounds to be the keynote of his interest. There is 'scarcely audible laughter shot through all the incidents in his novels. Professor P.P. Mehta's views are agreeable:

"His characters sometimes do great and heroic things, but it is more by accident than by design. - - The intellectual interest is the main spring of his inspiration and that is the angle from which he approaches all the aspects of his subjectmatter. The result is that he analyses actions and diagnoses motives. All these lead to subtle under-current of humorous remarks. - - The intellectual type of humour hovers over every page of Narayan". 26

His Plot - Construction

The plots of Narayan's novels follow a set formula:

Order - Disorder - order again. In his novels it is evident
that life selfom takes a straight course. Whatsoever may be
the human wishes, the final result of all efforts is unpredictable, and therefore, it is better to put up a good and jolly
face against all this predicament than feel aggrieved about
it. That is why, Narayan keeps a balance between the tracic
and comic incidents which happen by turn in the lives of his
protagonist. He starts with the idea of character but plot
and character are so well-knit that there is a unity of
design. He divides his story in three parts: the part one
consists of beginning which may be called order, the second
designs the process of action in which there is disorder,
and the third part comprises the restoration of normalcy and
order.

Since Narayan's approach to his subject-matter is that of a detached artist, his plots reflect this objectivity. In regard to the average English novel or Hindi novel it is

commonly noted that it consists of a number of characters and incidents which are woven round a young, handsome hero and heroine, eventually ending with the happy chimes of marriage bells. But Narayan, far from being a geltestist, seldom plans the subject too elaborately. He himself points out:

" I can write best when I donot plan the subject too elaborately -- All I can settle for myself is my protagonist's general type of personality - my focus is all on character.

27

If his personality comes alive, the rest is easy for me . "

It means that Narayan's basic concern is with the character and the plot comes secondarily. However, Narayan gives interesting and startling stories which are very often episodic and with his usual habit of scene-painting. Both his characterization and plot-construction are blended with realism and fantasy. As it is evident from the slender sizes of his novels hardly covering round two-hundred odd pages, Narayana avoids complicated contrivances and incensity. The interest and motives of his protagonists are so simple that there is seldom any need of complex plots and conscious or deliberate skilful contrivances. The blend of comic with serious, real with fantastic is so perfect and well-designed that the plot is enriched with order and harmony.

'The Guide' is a representative novel of Narayan.

From this novel it is evident that the framework of a Narayan novel is seldom mechanical or external. There is no place for thrills and sensations, long lost heirs and accidental discoveries. The action flows smoothly out of the protagonist and

in turn it influences and moulds the character. A Narayan hero is just ordinary and his novels treat of the subtle realities of the common man - whether he is a student, a teacher, a printer, a financial expert, a champion of emancipation, a guide, a shopkeeper or a painter of signs - and they are more diverting than disturbing. Inspite of differences of plot and protagonism, Narayan's novels are all of a piece in the way that they all centre on transcendence and renewal of life, resting eventually on a Wordsworthian "tranquil restoration". The events in his novels which indicate the texture of common experience define the prevailing circumstances with regard to the development of characters and concurrently suggest a kind of dilectical progress towards spiritual maturity. The demands of life are seldom denied there. Almost all heroes of Narayan's novels are placed in a characteristic struggles and they are continually involved in crises on account of their naivete of being common human beings. All these heroes are a comic blend of virtue and weakness, as a large number of human beingsare, and their continual involvement in crises imply a series of experience which hardly varies in its essentials from novel to novel. There is no doubt that the conditions as well as convolutions of the struggles do differ from novel to novel because much depends upon the particular protagonist's predilections and propensities in relation to profession and purpose, the individual struggles highlight a common predicament or pattern which can only be discerned beneath diversity.

That Narayan uses archetypal pattern in the structure of plot and character, can be discerned from the major novels -

'The Bachelor of Arts', 'The Dark Room', 'The English Teacher', 'Mr. Sampath', 'The Financial Expert', 'The Guide', 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi', 'Second opinion' and 'A Tiger For Malgudi'.

Examples of this archetypal pattern, according to Arthur Koestler are:

sion of sexual duality into the metaphysical polarities of masculine logic and feminine intuition, mother earth and heavenly father etc., the strife between generations— and its counter - point . . . the urge to penetrate to the ultimate mystery - and the resigned admission that reality is beyond the mind's grasp, hidden by veil of Maya . . . These perennial patterns of victory and defeat recur in ever-changing variations throughout the ages, because they derive from the very essence of the human condition - its paradoxes and predicaments. They play an all important part in literature, from Greek tragedy down to the present, permeating both the whole and the part:

The strife of generation and then convincing reconciliation between the old and the new form the important part of the plot of 'The Bachelor of Arts'. Chandran revolts against the orthodox social customs of horoscopic agreement in marriage and his frustration induces him to the extent of abandoning his home and becoming a sanyasi. This strife of generation becomes the cardinal point in 'The Vendor of Sweets! The death and resurrection motif is adroitly explored in 'The Guide'. In the recent novel, 'Second Opinion' the strife of generation again appears and is treated more interestingly

than in 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'The Vendor of Sweets'.

The ultimate reality occupies the most important place and attention in 'A Tiger For Malgudi'.

The ends of Narayan's novels, to a great extent, are shrouded in ambiquity. In 'Swami & Friends' the ambiquity remains to hold much critical attention at the moment when the train departs carrying Rajam and Swami is left with Mani to discuss whether Rajam has resumed the similar friendship with him or not. In 'The Dark Room' Savitri comes back home sacrificing her ego on the altar of parental love, but nothing is said about Ramani's relation with his beloved Shantabai whether he has cut himself aloof or still enjoys company with her illegitimately. In 'The Guide' also the end of the novel invites considerable critical attention and different interpretations have been offered by different critics. For instance, Uma Parameswaran expresses her view that Raju does not die in the river but is saved by a Glucose-Saline injection. living on and enjoying his reputation as a Mahatama. Whether the same happens to Raju or not depends on psychological interpretations and needless argumentation. But the fact cannot be denied that the end of 'The Guide' is a fine instance of the effective use of ambiguity. If Raju has died in the real sense, then his self-realization which happens at the last moment cannot be said to have served the humanity further. But as there should be a correlation between what the author expresses and the reader understands. Raju dies actually and it would not only be out of the point to develop the idea of his being alive further but also be futile to turn away from the writer's point

of view. Narayan has himself clarified about his hero's death in his memoir, 'My Days', which he discussed with his champion Graham Greene:

While I was hesitating whether to leave my hero alive or dead at the end of the story. Graham Greene was definite that he should die. So I have on my hands the life of a man condemned to death before he was born and grown, and I have to plan my narrative to lead to it. This becomes a major obsession with me.

Unity of time and unity of place are the key-note of Narayan's plots. He keeps them intact more for aesthetic reasons. He seldom goes beyond his recurrent locale, nor do so his characters, with a few exceptions; as Chandran goes to Madras and returns sadder, Balu in 'The Financial Expert' gets more corrupted and Mali in "The Vendor of Sweets" loses his Indianness completely because of his sinful living with Grace, the half-American and half-Korean girl and defiance to everything Indian.

So far as Narayan's plots are concerned, his art lies in artlessness. His is an art that conceals art. His plots have a delightful mixture of realism, fantasy, poetry, perception and calety. As a movelist of purity and simplicity he stands alone among Indians writing in English, there seems none else to have the like distinction.

Impact of Social, Political & Religious Conditions :

Narayan differs from his closest contemporaries -M. R. Anand and Raja Rao whose art of the novel is based on political and religious consciousness. He seldom uses the medium of the novel for any purpose other than giving aesthetic pleasure to his readers. He writes his novels with no ulterior motive of presenting any problem. However, it does not mean that he is aimless. His aim is to please and not to instruct. As every writer is influenced by his conditions, Narayan could not escape the impact of social and religious conditions which became instrumental in the evolution of his personality as a writer. He shows his reluctance towards politics because a pure and simple person of his calibre would have hardly preferred to political buffoonery. He was inspired by Gandhiji's simplicity, truth and fearlessness, untouchability and quicksightedness and they permeated into his personality. Since he is an artist first and anything thereafter, his novels are unadultrated pieces of art. Whatever other problems incur in his fiction they are more by implication than by advocacy.

Like Rabindranath Tagore Narayan is a unique example of the East-West meet. He was born and brought up in a family which had high regard for education and religion, His father, being a headmaster in Government High School, was a middleclass man. The large family of Narayans believed in all Hindu customs, traditions and conventions prevailing in the South Indian society. Narayan's education which he mostly got in christian schools and colleges - Lutheran Mission School, Christian High School etc.

broadened his outlook and developed in him a sense of belonging to others. That is why, we hardly find in his writings communal, fanatical and sceptical descriptions what—ever experiences he underwent in his schooldays have been universally depicted in his earlier novels — 'Swami & Friends', 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'The English Teacher'. These earlier novels throw a considerable light on the prevailing conditions in Indian schools and colleges where teachers were so dominating as to spoil the students and students in turn were no better than grudgethem severely. Narayan himself points out how education was given so much attention in his family:

family like ours. My outlook on education never fitted in with the accepted code at home. I instinctively rejected both education and examinations with their unwarranted seriousness and esoteric suggestions. Since revolt was unpractical, I went through it all without conviction, enthusiasm, or any sort of distinction. Going to school seemed a never-ending nuisance each day, to be born because of my years. "30

It is not difficult to infer what would have been the position of such a boy at home and in the society. Narayan's growing reluctance towards education which had become a tool in the hands of the west-oriented and converted teachers diverted his attention towards the world at large. He became peculiar in tastes and temperament. His sensitive nature

helped him in reading human nature at length and mitigating his frustration. He read the ordinary man and his predicament in the society like his astrologer who appears in 'An Astrologer's Day' and has a working analysis of mankind's troubles which are rooted in 'marriage, money and tangles of human ties'. His later novels from 'The English Teacher' onward throw a considerable light on these problems such as the breaking away of joint-family system, obstacles presented by astrological considerations in the union of true lovers, and above all the east-west encounters resulting into clashes between the old and the new. New changes concern the society and man cannot be left alone by their impact, as Narayan himself points out:

"Society presses upon us all the time. The progress of the last half century may be described as the progress of the Frog out of his Well. All means of communications, all methods of speedy travel, all newspapers, broadcasts and every kind of invention is calculated to keep up a barrage of attack on the frog in the well. He will not to left alone". 31

The gradual disappearance of the caste-system has 32 been delightfully portrayed 'Caste : Old and New'. The West had started making deep inroads into the common man's life in India and Narayan's penetrative eye could be able to grasp this new tendency minutely. His Malgudi from 'Mr. Sampath' onward reflects this new change not only in the Geographical aspects of the town but also in the steady erosion of the

traditional ways of life and the rise of new values necessarily accompanying the contemporary cultural upheaval in the country. In 'The Guide' the traditional ways of life are outrightly rejected both by Raju and Rosie. Marco also looks like a foreigner at home having cast aside a lovely creature as Rosie into the hands of a rougue and confining his whole attention on archeological research. In 'The Vendor of Sweets' both Jagan and Mali, in their exaggerations and conflicts, appear to be alienated beings. Mali's alienation being cultural tends to intensify the rebellionsness already present in him when he was a student at Albert Mission College. As Raju in *The Guide * derides the traditional ways of life. Mali in 'The Vendor of Sweets moves a step forward to add in his personality self-centredness, money-mindedness and a get-rich-quick mentality. Not to speak of caste and creed, he lives in sinful union with Grace, symbolizing cultural topsy-turvyism. Mali's over-reaching project of producing a story-writing machine is symbolical of absurd materiastic ambitions and the impersonal mechanization of the western attitude getting quick recognition in the Indian society. The western attitude seems to have been bent upon capturing and controlling creative freedom of the writer and producing works of art to order instead of allowing them to emerge freely and naturally. But it does not mean that Narayan pleads for the indigenous values. On the other hand, he evinces how they are being ignored by socalled western -minded people of India. On the one hand, such people are conscious of being Indian as they know that it is easy to lead a life of contradictions here, and on the other

they plead for the over-all supremacy of the west setting aside the claims of discrimination.

Narayan, with his background of English education, his wide sympathies apparent from his comments on christianity both in 'Swami & Friends' and 'My Days' and his comprehensive and clear-eyed vision could in no way ignore the seemingly divergent attitudes of the people who were confused heap of the East and the West. The lack of discrimination and poise has corroded the very soul of India. This tendency can be envisaged in the rising middle class of South India which Narayan portrays in his novels and short stories. The penetrative eye of the author could easily notice the impact of Western culture and attitude of people to judge everything on the basis of money. Therefore, it is clear that the West provided Narayan to look at everything with commonsense and the East gave him the touchstone of universal quality on which everything could be judged impartially and sympathetically.

As an advocate of joint-family system in society and controlled mind of the individual, this great novelist is reluctant to Indian treatment of politics. He displays his considerable sense of detachment in the portrayal of political figures in his novels and short stories. He speaks of politics reluctantly and impersonally sometimes in the outburst of his characters, as Gajapati's in 'The English Teacher':

"There are times when I wish there were no politics in the world and no one knew who was ruling and how . . . the whole of the west is a muddle, owing to its political

consciousness, and what a pity that the East should also follow suit. **34

He speaks of democracy as a dull subject from the writer's point of view. It is not his escapistic attitude towards politics but he points out the weaknesses of democracy as it has begun to move on set lines:

"Election date, compaigning, convassing, polling, results, a seat in assembly hall speechifying and division, for the next two three or four years till the time. comes to renew the personalities in the hall, like renewing the plants in the pots on the Veranda. This is a well worn line of movement and the subject has lost its novelty."

The election being a one-way business has unsatisfactory nature and arouses discontentment in the public life of the country. According to Narayan, the public must have an equal privilege to de-elect the already elected one if he or she does not prove to rise to the expectations of people. His suggestion seems to plead for the better privilege of the public, deeper political consciousness, and awareness to improve the Indian politics. In 'Waiting For the Mahatama' also he satirises the chairman of the municipality who has little broad-mindedness and sympathy to treat the untouchable boy properly, even in the presence of Mahatama Gandhi. In his short story 'Lawley Road' his sarcastical tone is noticeable against the chairman of the municipality and the members of the council who, in their so-called patriotic fervour, decide

to nationalize the names of all the streets and parks, creating a lot of hardships to the public. There is a lot of confusion as 'letters went where they were not wanted - - - The town became a wilderness with all its landmarks gone".

Narayan's reluctance towards politics is founded on the belief of the common man in Indian politics. The middle-class common man " - - - is unable to bear all the improvements and benefits that his would-be champions attempt to heap on his head". 37

There may be reasons for this novelist's critical outlook towards politics in general and Indian politics in particular. The way in which Indian democracy is moving may hardly be liked by the honest man of Narayan's background.

So far as religion is concerned Narayan is deeprooted in ancient Indian religion. It was during his childhood that religious consciousness was awakened by his great
maternal grandmother in whose company he was brought up and
educated as a child. She was an astrologer, Versatile, helpful and a key-figure in the lives of many, as the novelist
describes her:

"She was also a match-maker; she poured over horoscopes and gave advice and used her influence to get marriages settled".

That is why, the stars never lie to Narayan. His own marriage proved a disaster very early, and against which the astrologer had already foretold him that the disagreement in

horoscopes was indicative of some catastrophe. What was foretold happened in Narayan's life, and therefore, whether some people believe or not, he believes firmly in the authenticity and validity of horoscope.

According to Narayan, religion should not openly be avowed, because ". . . it's like one's underwear. You may make oblique reference to it or joke about it. . . you may joke about God, but that is as far as you should go in civilized societies - - God is supposed to bear the universe on his little finger, and when he changes it from the right to his left - - there is an earthquake."

He, as he himself points out, is unable to write a novel without Krishna, Ganesa, Hanuman, astrologers, temples, devadasis or temple prostitutes.

This religious consciousness of the novelist was converted into spiritual consciousness after the demise of his wife whom he could never forcet for a while. Through spiritual practice he developed into himself magical powers as he refers to them in his memoir:

"I could catch telepathic messages or transmit my thoughts to others; and I could generally sense what was coming ahead or anticipate what someone would say - - - I practised psychic contacts regularly for some years, almost every night.

I found it possible to abstract from my physical body (a process taught by paul Brunton) and experience a strange sense

of deliverence - - I attained an understanding of life and death 40

The recent novel 'A Tiger For Malgudi' displays this tendency of Narayan who is not only an enlightened one but also a remarkable torch - bearer to the spiritual aspirant. A true devotee of the Goddess Gayatri and a Sacred soul, Narayan is the symbol of a great fountain which showers love, purity and pure delight through his fiction. Being a traditional Hindu, confining his whole attention on the question of self-seeking, he is able to impart a glorious message to the whole humanity.

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CHAPTER - III

The Comic Genius of R.K. Narayan

An outstanding gift of R.K. Narayan as a fiction writer is his 'capacity to affect a comic catharsis', the cathartic happiness. His laughter which he expresses through his characters, situations and well-made scenes is intensely happy, not in the least tainted by cynicism and never by bitterness. As humour requires kindly amused perception of incongruities and absurdities of life and the artistic expression of such perception. Narayan's humour is all pervasive and most varied. As a true humorist he has some Shakespearean kind of sympathy and gentleness of heart in the exploration of incongruities of life. discrepancy or contrast between what is and what should be, between illusion and reality, by exposing and ridiculing human follies and frivolities. Though his humour is ironic in tone, Narayan is not a satirist moralizing and lashing with indignation at human wickedness and vices with a view to correcting them. He is always suggesting. As irony is composed of two opposites which are contrasting. Marayan's irony is a rich compound of broad humour, gentle mockery and genial ridicule! There is no doubt that his irony is always compatible with the most intense feelings, there is hardly any scope in it for the arid realms of dreary sentimental thinking or for a hysterical and distracting sentimentality. He uses delicate irony with a view to measuring a detached observation and side by side illuminating the character of a person and exposing his weaknesses. Such a method as applied by Narayan helps arouse love in the

reader's heart for the person whom the author intends to be loved. And here he succeeds marvellously.

Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar calls Narayan 'a master of comedy'. But his comedy is never one-sided. It is a serious comedy that springs from the diversity of human experience and Narayan's compassionate but objective understanding ofit. His moral vision is vitalized by his technique of comedy. The depth in comedy results by Narayan's acceptance of traditional and religious values which serve to place his characters in moral relief. He seems to use comedy in order to distinguish between the abiding and the absurd. That is why, his moral vision and objective humanism are never deliberately and consciously cultivated in his writing. They are the inherent part of his story-telling and the cultural environment represented by Malçudi that forms the background of all his novels and short stories.

The human quality of his comedy owes considerably to his attractiveness for eccentric behaviour which he finds in human beings. As his art 'is an imitation of life', much of the humour in his fiction results from the discrepancy which he intends to manifest between the normal code and the exaggerated dedication of the eccentric person to it or total deviation from it. Kailas in 'The Bachelor of Arts' and Marco in 'The Guide' are unique examples of this eccentric behaviour as the former is so much obsessive to drinks and prostitution despite his outgrowing age and two wives at home while the latter has even no time to entertain his young and beautiful wife. The one is

akin to exaggerated dedication while the other has a total deviation from the reality of flesh and blood.

Narayan's use of serious comedy in his fiction seems to have been inspired by life itself. As life is neither totally a tragedy nor completely a comedy, Narayan's serious comedy presents smiles and tears together. William Walsh rightly observes that Narayan's irony is one of 'recognition' and not of 'correction' and therefore, his comedy is more human than a mere technical device to rouse laughter for the sake of laughter. Instead of confining his whole attention to the small slice of life and showing interest in the complexity of human relations he presents a panoramic view of life.

Narayan's serious comedy covers a wide range inclusive of archetypal comedy, comedy of misunderstanding, comedy of sublime and ridiculous, comedy of conventions and comedy of manners (to some extent different from the Restoration Comedy of manners), & comedy of mischance and misdirection. Professor Tyengar rightly observes that despite Narayan's mastery over comedy he

"--- is not unaware of the tragedy of the human situation; he is neither intolerant critic of Indian ways and modes nor their fanatic defender; he is on the whole, content to snap Malgudi life's little ironies, knots of satiric circumstance, and tragi-comedy of mischance and misdirection."

In R.K. Narayan's fiction we have intensely a happy laughter which is free from the taint of cynicism and bitterness.

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There is pure sentiment and fine humour corrected from the cheap sentimentality by his detached and loving irony. Its net result is pure aesthetic delight, happiness and peace.

In his early novels - 'Swami & Friends' (1935), 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937), 'The Dark Room' (1938) and 'The English Teacher' (1944) Narayan's comic vision is limited to the eccentricities and idiosyncracies of schoolboys, teachers, bully husband and traditionally conscious as well as unconscious wives. Comedy of innocence and comedy of mischance and misdirection spring from their oddities and angularities of behaviour. In his later novels comedy grows into dimensions and it takes the form of comedy of sublime and the ridiculous, archetypal comedy and comedy of manners. Narayan's earliest admirer among the fellow novelists, Greene observes that his (Narayan's) comedy depends primarily upon classicism and conventionalism. ". . comedy needs a strong framework of social convention with which the author sympathises. . . But the life of Malgudi - never ruffled by politics - proceeds in exactly the same way as it has done for centuries, and the juxtaposition of the age - old conventions and the modern character provides much of the comedy". 2

Marayan's earlier novels - 'Swami & Friends' and 'The Bachelor of Arts' - than the post - Independence novels among which 'The Man-Eater of Malqudi' is obviously typical. There are cardinally two types of comedy in Narayan's fiction - the one that arises from the 'disturbance of a classic way of life by the modern; and the comedy that takes its origin from the abrupt and brutal incursion of evil, violence, corruption into the

pacific eccentricity of the Malgudian world. 'Swami & Friends' and 'The Bachelor of Arts' are devoid of serious psychological probing which we find in 'The Guide', 'Mr. Sampath', 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi', 'The Vendor of Sweets' and 'A Tiger for Malgudi'. It is interesting to notice that in novels from 'Mr. Sampath' onwards the private life themes concentrating on the individual are more obvious. Narayan himself points out in the Atlantic Monthly how nationalism prevented the would-be comic-writer from concentrating on the sphere of comedy. Then the private life of the individual was sacrificed on the altar of national struggle for freedom. But subsequently the change took place, and after independence the writer confined himself to depict the way of life of the group of people with whose psychology and background he was most familiar. Had Narayan confined his comedy to classicism and conventionalism. as Graham Greene remarked in his introduction to 'The Financial Expert', all his Malgudi novels would have been placed at a single moment of time. The 'Edwardian' novels of Ivy Compton -Burnett are placed at a single moment of time, as she herself points out :

"I donot feel that I have any real or organic knowledge of life later than about 1910. I should not write of later times with enough grasp and confidence. I think this is why, many writers tend to write of the past. When an age is ended, you see it as it is. And I have a dislike, which I cannot explain, of dealing with modern machinery and inventions. When war casts its shadow, I find that I recoil."

It is, therefore, obvious that time stands still in Burnett's fiction, but Narayan's novels, in fact, march in step will with the time and the evolving history of the twentieth century. This fact is detected from the discerning study of his fiction that Narayan is interestingly involved with the comedy of change inclusive of the illusion of progress. Apart from the Malgudi setting, the common incredient in all his subsequent novels is the theme of private life of individuals instead of the frantic public life of India before independence, during independence and after independence.

Thus Narayan is the successful practitioner of serious comedy. Through his comic mode he seems to affirm that the average and the common place is also capable of the highest tragedy of human life. His tragi-comic novels and short-stories indicate how love, money, prestice, physical beauty are all generators of illusion with a view to driving away from the reality. All complications in human relationship emerge from these illusive things, and therefore, for the establishment of right relationship, man should try to get rid of such illusion. There is no doubt that it is through tragedy that serious problems of life are grappled, but Narayan seems to highlight the point that in the hands of a consummate artist even comedy is capable of tackling all serious problems equally well. And herein lies his greatness as a comic artist of high order.

His Art of Characterization

According to Aristotle, 'Character is a soul of Tragedy.'
But the same remark is applicable to the novel also. It is really

through characterization that the greatness of a novelist is measured. Narayan is a very dedicated writer who relies considerably on artistic intuition, on a feeling for the appropriate gesture, attitude and action or remark in order to realize his character's personality. His 'focus is on character' as he himself told Roland E.Wolseley,

"I can write best when I donot plan the subject too elaborately -- All I can settle for myself is my protagonist's general type of personality. If his personality comes alive, the rest is easy for me: background and minor characters develop as I progress".

Chandran (The Bachelor of Arts'), Krishnan (The English Teacher'), Margayya (The Financial Expert'), Raju (TheGuide')

Vasu (The Man-Eater of Malgudi) Jagan (The Vendor of Sweets),

Raman (The Painter of Signs) and Raja (A Tiger For Malgudi')

veritably testify to this dominance of the main characters in

his novels. Narayan creates characters with the combination of

a process of imaginative gestation and careful observation of

people he has seen around him.

He told Hans Beerman how he selected characters in his novels and short stories :

"They are partially based on local Mysore folk and acquaintances of mine - but not wholly. I often build them up. However, I make no deliberate studies. Still, Mysore is a small enough place that lends itself to acute observation. It seems to me that more eccentric people live here than elsewhere."

If anyone who happens to be in Mysore, will find the characters of Narayan's fiction virtually moving there in market places, the railway station, and sitting at shops and working in the printing presses. Narayan himself feels like his own protagonist, Raju

" - - especially when I am telling about Mysore".

He tells how 'some family incidents and his own character had given him the conception of Raju and that Rosie and her husband Marco had a similar genesis'. Narayan corelates life and art in such a convincing manner that they are fused into one. He avoids being merely an author of delightful comic entertainments. His serious observation of life consists of its cardinal aspects—sad, funny, ironic, incongruous, absurd, eccentric, tender and holy. His fourth novel, 'The English Teacher' is more autobiographical than any other novel he has published so far. 'Mr. Sampath' is also based on a real—life person of the same name; who not only remained Narayan's printer but also had allowed the novelist to use his name freely. His 'Financial Expert', too, has the amalgmation of two-real—life persons whose exploits induced him to gather the basic ingredients of Margayya's story. He

"-- considers his morning walk his office hours because he stops and talks to people, many of whom chat with him freely about their doings and their troubles --- he observes their ways closely".

This experience seems to have been clearly described in '+The Man-Eater of Malgudi' emphathising with Natraj who starts his day in a similar manner. Natraj tells:

"My day started before four in the morning. The streets would be quite dark when I set out to the river for my ablutions - - - All along the way I had my well-defined encounters. The milkman started on his rounds. - - - creeted me respectfully and asked, "What is the time master?" - - a question I allowed to die without a reply - - I simpered and let him pass suppressing the question".

It is, therefore, clear that Narayan depends considerably on objective characterization and this is one of the reasons that his characters not only appear to be real, but also are objective. It is through precision and care that he builds them interesting and loveable. His characters remain within their resolved limits and act and move in the local atmosphere of Malgudi.

His Concept Of the Hero

It is clear that Narayan selects the living characters from society to portray them in his fiction. Among them the hero is the most important person to dominate the whole course of events by dint of his personality and character, but not like epic heroes who have heroic qualities and are shown to have been gifted with unquestionable courage and vitality. The hero in Narayan's novel is an average man belonging to the middle class

of South Indian society and having a mark potential for the uncommon. This mark potential for uncommon brings him into clash with circumstances and he is overpowered eventually and becomes a tool in the hands of destiny as well as in the enormity of his own creation till he is forced by his inner self to return to a more mature state of ordinary. Therefore, the usual pattern into which his hero is woven is obvious from one novel to another. It is from average to the extraordinary and returning to a more poignant state of average. This appears to be a reiterated movement basically in regard to interacting characters in the majority of Narayan's novels. But it does not mean that Narayan's art of characterization is static. It is certainly dynamic because inspite of this usual pattern: average — extraordinary — and average with maturity, there is a variety of protagonists.

This usual pattern is evident right from his first novel, "Swami & Friends". Narayan introduces the ordinary hero Swaminathan who in contact with his companions grows to a mature state at last. His ideal friend is Rajam who happens to be the son of a D.S.P. and presumably a sophisticated boy in tastes and manners. This superiority of Rajam is a total contrast to Swami's inferiority complex composed of 'apprehension, weakness and nervousness'. This pair of inferior and superior occupies the canvas of the novelist and appears almost in all novels published so far. Out of thirteen novels, ten are those which have been given protagonistic titles: 'The Bachelor of Arts', 'The English Teacher', 'Mr. Sampath', 'The Financial Expert', 'The Man - Eater Of Malgudi', 'The Guide', 'The Vendor of Sweets', 'The Painter

Of Signs' and 'A Tiger For Malgudi' and the maiden novel,

"Swami & Friends'. The protagonist could be the same character

under the influence of other character, but his unquenchable

quest for a positive philosophy of life remains undisturbed

till he attains spiritual maturity. The ways to cross the

journey of life may be different, but the goal is the same.

This happens to be the prime object of almost every protagonist

of Narayan's novels.

It is a discernible tendency of Narayan's art of characterization to present a contrast to his hero so that his personality could grow into dimensions. This characteristic can be noted in his ten novels particularly for instance, Swami is a contrast to Rajam in 'Swami & Friends' as the former is coverned by feeling and the latter by reason and commonsense. Chandran and Mohan in 'The Bachelor of Arts', Krishnan and the soul of his deceased wife in 'The English Teacher' Sampath and Srinivas in 'Mr. Sampath', Margayya and Dr. Pal in 'The Financial Expert', 'Raju and Marco and thereafter Raju and Valen in 'The Guide', Natraj and Vasu in 'The Man Eater of Malgudi', Jagan and cousin in 'The Vendor of Sweets', Raman and Daisy in 'The Painter of Signs' and Raja and Hermit in 'A Tiger For Malgudi' present a contrast to one another. This contrast is symbolized by feeling and reasons. Chandran, Krishnan, Srinivas, Margayya, Natraj, Jagan, Raman have their protetype in Swaminathan, the model on which Narayan developed the personality of all these protagonists. The second line on which the protagonist are developed is the line of reason. Sampath, Dr. Pal, Raju,

Margayya, and Vasu are made, more or less, of the same stuff. Therefore, there are two types of protagonists in Narayan's novels who become instrumental in bringing about the desired revelation of life to the hero.

Inspite of his ordinary personality and average backcround a Narayan hero is a prominent man, not by virtue of his talents but because of his significant presence in almost all the events which may differ from one novel to another, but their scheme is the same. The hero, being ordinary and at commonplace is subject to some dramatic happening in course of his life. This dramatic happening is bound to be resulting into a more mature experience beyond which no worse than that has already affected severly can trouble the hero's mind in Narayan's novels. Morality and psychology are fused to analyse the workings of the hero's mind. The main purpose of the author is to show the growth of an individual from annonymity to glory. The thematic pattern within which the lives of his protagonists appear to be working is the acceptance of life inspite of its irrationalities and absudities. The hero accepts life in totality. But he is the blend of virtue and vice as all human beings are.

His Concept Of the Heroine

The heroines of Narayan's novels are flimsy. He has himself revealed this fact in his interview with Onlooker:

"Why was it he had no heroines but heroes in his novels?"

Mr. Narayan corrected Onlooker,

"I have no heroes, only non-heroes, and ofcourse no heroines". 11

It is because he finds women firm and forbearing. Their life is governed by set regulations and they are basically clean-headed, at least in the small town world of his novels, and short stories. Men have a tendency to fumble and become uncertain, as Narayan could discover through his insight in human beings, and they are usually uncertain. He found women more stereotyped than men.

However, some heroines in his novels are not only impressive but also bewitching. There are two lines on which his women characters have been designed. Those who are deeprooted in Hindu culture appear in early novels - 'The English Teacher', 'Mr. Sampath' (Srinivas' wife) and those who look foreigners at home figure in the later novels. Savitri of 'The Dark Room' and Sushila of 'The English Teacher' are the representation of Hindu middleclass housewives who have their strong roots in ancient Hindu culture and a sacrifycing zeal. But heroines of the later novels are a blend of East-West tendencies to a great extent, the western tendency affecting their persons surprisingly. Their aspirations are more dominating than the actuality. Shantabai in 'The Dark Room', Shanti in 'Mr. Sampath' Rosie in 'The Guide' and Daisy in 'The Painter of Signs' appear to have been made of similar stuff of apprehension, revolt and deviation from the normal code of life. Yet they are free from the analytical experiment of the novelist who seems to believe that despite their objectionable obsession to strange objects, they are still clearheaded, if not completely, at least better than men comparatively.

Minor Characters

As already clarified by Narayan in his interview with W.E. Walsely, minor characters are developed in the course of progress of the story. Nevertheless, there is a galaxy of minor characters who are helpful and adaptable to the protaconists, and at times they are allowed to appear equally as important as the main characters are Mari and Ponni' in 'The Dark Room', Gangu and Jannamma in the same novel, Ravi and the house owner in 'Mr. Sampath', Kailas in 'The Bachelor of Arts', Rangi, Sastri, Sen, the Nehru - baiting journalist in 'The Man-Eater Of Malgudi', Dr. Kishan in 'Second opinion' and Captain and his wife in 'A Tiger for Malgudi' are all memorable characters of flesh and blood, of virtues and vices as their counterparts in the real life are.

Narayan uses perennials and prototypes both who are based on culturally convincing ideology. But he, as Raji Narasimhan states:

"Provides the best illustration of the first type (perennials). Essentially, almost all his characters are re-creations of one basic character: a basic Narayan character. What prevents this from polling is his ever-fresh enthusiasm for the revived character, a genuine and quiet, unaffected

liking for him. But apart from these re-creations of a basic figure there are some who appear as Staccato. They are left untouched and, apparently, are considered plastic enough by the author to blend into the particular mood and situation. 12

She is partially right in her statement that apart from the recreations of a basic figure some staccato figures are left untouched. The fact seems that they also influence the basic character in one way or the other. And if they are not woven in the plot as a logical integration, it is because they appear almost on the occasion when their presence is unavoidably felt. The grandmother is one of such figures. She would be familiar with all South Indian orthodox ways of life. The adjournment lawyer also figures in most of the novels (The Guide & 'The Man Eater of Malgudi'). And the most important character is the town, Malgudi, which has perpetuated in thirteen novels and eighty-four short stories so far. Professor K.R.S.

"- - interesting to advance the theory that Malgudi is the real hero of the -- novels and the many short stories; that underneath the seeming change and the human drama there is something - the 'soul' of the place ? - that defies, or embraces, all change and is triumphantly and unalterably itself".

It is evident that Narayan's novels are cardinally the novels of characters and it is unmistakably through characterization that he affirms his vision of life. In his characterization he may not be as great as Shakespeare and Charles Dickens are, but he is the adept delineator of the convincing characters

which are part fiction and part fact. Like Jane Austen's, his range of character is not only limited but also more convincing because he chooses them from the middle class of South India. Having psychological inconsistency they are full of life and vitality. They are neither saints nor sinners but entirely human in their likes and dislikes as we people are. Krishnan, Ramani, Sampath, Margayya, Raju, Rosie, Marco, Gajapathi, Shantabai, Raja and Tiger-Hermit - all are his memorable creations.

His Humour, Irony, Satire, Wit & Exaggeration.

Humour, as defined by Penguin English Dictionary, is 'capacity for seeing the funny side of things; cheerful and good-tempered amusement'. Thackeray calls it, 'a mixture of love and wit'. The same idea is put in a different wording by Hegel, "What . . is inseparable from the comic is distinguished from the merely laughable is an infinite geniality and confidence, capable of rising superior to its own contradiction, and experiencing there in no taint of bitterness or sense of misfortune whatever".

Narayan's humour, as he defines in his essay 'On Humour' in 'Next Sunday', . . " . lightens the burden of existence". But he warns his readers that it still remains the individual business, and therefore, it should not be analysed and studied separately. It does not mean that he is against analysis and study but because humour is not a device to be applied for inducing laughter; it is the consummation of the human instinct for laughter.

Narayan derives inspiration for his humour from the 'absurdities and contradictions seen in public life'. The self-important men like 'Vasu' also provide ingredient for his humour because of their pomposities. The elaborate pageantry at the arrival and departure of the V.I.P. and the ridiculous fuss of the bureaucrats then also inspige his imagination to create a funny scene with the pure intention to create laughter and side by side lay his finger on trivialities of the situation. Thus, we get in his fiction humour of character or humour arising from the odd and grotesque in character or person, humour of situation or farcical humour, humour arising from jokes, jests, repartees, retorts and the clever use of the language from various points of view. Sometimes his humour admirably mingles with pathos and then the reader is led to smile through his tears. Even at the moments of the highest tragedy Narayan can be comic. Satiric humour is also there in his novels and short stories but it is primarily used to satirise money-lenders, greedy businessmen. extorting houseowners, blackmarketeers and profiteers, producers of obscene films, credulous simpletons, fake sanyasis, halfhearted dreamers, speculators and twisters. But in this satiric humour he is so mild and gentle that it is very often difficult to discover and decide whether he is satiric or he is intending to expose and ridicule for the amusement of his readers. Since he accepts life as it is howsoever irrational and absurd it may be, his humour is ironical, genial and kindly. He is hardly carried away by the zeal of the reformer. It is his nature to be a humorist of the ridiculous and the sublime, but he is not

a satirist. Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah rightly remarks and effectively points out that:

" Narayan's sense of the comic is sustained not by the Dickensian kind of exaggeration but rather, if a comparison has to be made to enlist understanding and evoke response, the irony of understatement practised by a Jane Austen".

The difference between Jane Austen and R.K. Narayan is that the former relies essentially on artistic amusement while the latter on artistic detachment. The artistic detachment is suitable to Narayan's shy temperament. His chief aim lies at showing the discrepancy between actuality and aspiration. The common is presented in somewhat uncommon way so that the inconsistency in the protagonist's behaviour and action could be recognized.

Narayan's humour is tolerant, urban and genial. As a comic writer he is closer in spirit to Chaucer, Shakespeare and Dickens than to Swift, Voltaire and Thackeray. Graham Greene compared Narayan to Chekhov and stated that he was closer to Chekhov than to any English author. Professor V.V.Kantak points out:

"The resemblance indeed is striking - the same objectivity, the same freedom from comment, the same "intricate alliance" of humour with tragedy - the comic flowing into delicate pathos, as delicate as the faint discolouration of ivory with age, as Greene puts it - and the same seeming indirection of event with which the characters, on the last page, appear

to vanish into life. Narayan's light vivid style with its sense of time passing, of the unrealized beauty of human relationships so often recalls Chekhov's."

But it will be incorrect to be presumptuous about any attempt, conscious or unconscious, at imitation by Narayan. The social milieus of Chekhov and Narayan are different, and so are their tenets of ethos. Chekhov had less freedom from social commitment or comment than Narayan. Narayan's comic vision is marked by a greater degree of optimism and affirmation. It is true that their attitudes to story and character have a marked affinity: Panduranga Rao inquires about this comparison in an interview with the novelist:

"They compare you to Chekhov. Have you read him?".

"Yes, after G.G. (Graham Greene) compared me to him. . yes, I do think he wrote like me (laughing) Chekhov has similar attitude to story and character. 17

Narayan's dispassionate comic detachment is the indication of a personal endeavour to attain a balance in his life, to surmount and rationalize the emptiness of the 'profound and unmitigated loneliness created by his wife's sudden demise. It was so sudden and traumatic that Narayan, as Ved Mehta records in his interview, ". . . considered following her into the funeral pyre". The personal realization, as already mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis, has been depicted in 'The English Teacher'.

As Krishnan realizes that to live without illusions would be the greatest task for him now, his author, Narayan also realized after his traumatic experience that all twist and turns of destiny would cease to shock and agonise if nothing more than the barest truths and facts of life were expected.

Subsequent novels - 'Mr. Sampath', 'The Financial Expert', 'The Guide', 'The Man- Eater of Malgudi', 'The Vendor of Sweets' and 'A Tiger For Malgudi' - all followed 'The English Teacher' and their comic thematic pattern in one of illusion - realization - disillusionment or catastrophe - self-awareness - resolution.'

Therefore, his humour is not a device but a way of life, a reference. It is deep-rooted in a traditional ethos and a scale of values, having a special reference to the institution of family which constitutes Narayan's sensibility - milieu.

A few examples through illustrations will clarify the point of discussion :

Humour in Absurdities and Contradictions in Public Life.

Narayan portrays scenes and situations to amuse his readers, but deeper meaning lies within, and that is, he intends to show how in India the relative absense of privacy puzzles the individual person. He has no power to desist the human tendency from regarding private affairs as a matter of public interest and concern. Our novelist finds excellent

novel material in such scenes and situations. In 'The Financial Expert' Margayya's son, Balu has thrown the red account-book to oblivion down a deep gutter. In causes a great deal of concern to Margayya who is a money-lender. Under the pressure of annoyance he begins to punish his son on the road. The intervening crowd quickly gathers at once and perversely regards Balu as a hero of the whole scene. A group of individuals goes to the extent of stripping Margayya off his parental authority. The scene serves as a splendid example of the way the novelist astutely conveys the quick psychological succession of events. "Someone dragged away the child crying:

"Save the child from this ruffian'... A woman with a basket came forward to ask, "Are you a heartless demon?
... She flung down the basket and picked up the child on her arm. Balu copiously sobbed on her shoulder. Another woman tried to take him from her, commenting "only those who bear the child for ten months in the womb know how precious it is.

Men are like this. Someone objected to this statement..

retorted with great warmth: "Boys must be chastised; otherwise do you want them to grow up into devils?" Margayya looked at him gratefully. Here at least was a friend in this absolutely hostile world. He swept his arms to address all the woman and the gathering. It's all very well for you to talk.

But he has thrown in there an important account book. What am I to do without it?" (PP.34-35).

Society is pressing upon Margayya from all sides.

Everyone seems to talk to him arrogantly except the man who supports his action and speaks rationally. But he too

is gone. He is well-acquainted with the tendency of his son who will not prefer his sympathisers to go until they take him to the shop and bring him peppermints. Margayya is afraid of society because no one will let him do what he likes. The folk even in the next house seem to have no better business than to hang about to see what is happening to Margayya. At home evem his wife is to behave rudely. She expresses her annoyance in a threatening way. He loses temper again. The whole situation for Margayya is full of absurdities and contradictions.

In 'Waiting For the Mahatama' there are splendidly funny scenes. The scene of reception given to Mahatama Gandhi who visits Malgudi as a political leader serves a unique example of the balanced comic tone and the centrality of human issues. Gandhiji and the chairman of the Malgudian Municipality are presented in contrast with each other for the former is the champion of love and humanity while the latter is a sociallysuppressed sychophant who poses himself to be a social-servant. Narayan hurls a mild satire against him and the District Collector who are too conscious to escape the impact of the British Empire, particularly in respect of treating the Mahatama only as a social reformer and not as a political leader. The scene reaches a satiric climax at Neelbagh when the chairman tries to secure Khaddar garments for himself and the family, including a hundred mile drive 'within the city in order to search for a white Khaddar cap to fit his six-year old son's dolichocephalic head" . (P.39); the display of oranges from

Natesh - chairman's Mempi - estates and Gandhiji's declining of orange juice because "it was not his hour for taking anything".(P.41); the Mahatama distributing Natesh's fruits to school-children; the chairman's chagrin "at the thought that the event was developing into a children's party"(P.41); and the Malgudian people swarming over his garden and "plucking flowers in his annual bed, which had been tended by the municipal overseers".(P.40).

Gandhiji may be the exception to India but Natesh is typical in respect of being found everywhere in the country.

Humour of Character

In 'The Guide' Raju is mistaken for a holy saint and Narayan blends comic irony and incongruity into one to display universal interest solely because the situation has an archetypal pattern. Humour serves in the unconventional as well as accidental way to exhibit Raju in possession of archetype. In this instance comedy is based on the archetype of withdrawal, renunciation and non-attachment. Raju's comic nobility in the way he ultimately sustains to the cultural motivation and pattern is a noticeable example.

This archetypal comedy, in a different but equally natural kind, serves to give 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' a distinctive flavour and structural coherence. Vasu is parallelled with the mythic archetype, the rakshasa with a view to correlating human actions and cosmic motives.

The metaphysics of Karma in the Indian context is happily accepted as a source to show the protagonists obtusely attempting to blame Fate for all kinds of happenings. Such happenings have obvious explanations because they are partly the outcome of a man's actions and partly the result of unfavourable circumstances. But it will not be surprising to note that Karma in Narayan's fiction is depicted very much on the proposition that character is fate. It means clearly that the protagonist's misfortune may be the outcome of his personality which is not balanced, and rooted in innate perversity. His salvation, therefore, may result from inner redeemable qualities.

This idea is given an ironic twist in the short story,

'The Trail of The Green Blazer" with the intention to show

that life is not a joke to live on. The protagonist Raju, a

pick-pocket is a past-master to watch crowds with professional

concentration. With much care and choice he selects his victim

a man in green blazer. He is moved to pity to discover that

the purse which he has picked up contains a baloon meant for

the motherless boy. Unable to pass on the thought of sobbing

motherless child deprived of his balloon, he is caught attemp
ting to slip the balloon back into 'Green Blazer's Pocket.

His statement to the magistrate that he was trying to return

the purse "became a stock-joke in the police world". The

story is concluded in conformity with moral as well as in

keeping with the central irony:

"He served his term of 18 months and came back into the world - not quite decided what he should do with himself."
He told himself: If ever I pick up something again, I shall make sure I don't have to put it back'. For now he believed God had gifted the likes of him with only one-way deftness.

Those fingers not meant to put anything back". (PP-18-19).

Raju's pity is explicitely in contradiction to his self-interest. But he has imagination to indulge, like other protagonists of Narayan's novels, in dramas of compassion and catastrophe. Raju, Sriram, Natraj, Sambu, Margayya, Sampath, Srinivas - all invite troubles which end in disaster and cause their sublimation.

Vasu, Ramani, Kailas and Margayya are invented on the basis of aggressiveness, 'extroversion and wilful evil-mindedness. They are self-assertive people and under the pressure of their ambitiously burdened minds they commit several blunders and become laughing-stock, They for a while try to disengage themselves from the rat-race, they are unable to escape temptations of the world.

It is, thus, clear that humour in Narayan's fiction is composed of irony, satire, wit, repartee, joke, retorts and skilful handling of the English language: For instance, his humour is discernible not only in the portrayal of eccentric characters, but it is curiously and closely woven in the texture of his prose: The following excerpt from 'The Man Eater Of Malgudi' clarifies it:

"Clients who went to him once never went again, as they sneezed interminably and caught their death of cold, asthematics went down for weeks after a legal consultation. His clients preferred to see him as he lounged about the premises of the district court in search of business, and he tackled their problems standing in the varandah of the court or under the shade of a tamarind tree in the compound. But he liked his inexperienced clients first to meet him at his office and catch a cold. I tried to dodge his proposal, but he was adament that I should meet him in the narrow room above the cotton shop". (P.53).

Here Narayan relies on exaggeration to induce laughter.

In 'The English Teacher', the protagonist, Krishnan compares
himself with the cow and curses his existence which has left
behind a 'sense of something missing'

In 'A Tiger For Malgudi', the captain's wife who feels tired of her husband mutters:

"He has lost all sense of humour, the slightest upset and he flounces out, let him - - I don't care - - only animals seem to be fit for his company". 20

In the Collector's Office the villagers who are baffled to have visited it twenty times feel confounded on hearing 'come tomorrow'. The office clerk irritates them by saying that no-one has invited them. He mutters:

"The officer is always on tour, what can I do if everyone comes and bothers me? Am I the officer drawing a fat salary?" (P.39.).

The Master - Hermit instructs Raja and tells him ironically about the oldage:

"Raja, oldage has come on you. Beautiful old days, when faculties are dimmed one by one, so that they may be restful, very much like extinguishing lights in a home, one by one, before one goes to sleep". (P.174).

The fusion of tragic - comic is superb and Shakespearean in tone. This is the great achievement of Narayan as
a novelist who knows how to exploit the possibilities of a
comic irony and colouring it with the hue of tragic.

Therefore, Professor K.R. Srinivas is right in his assertion that Narayan is the master of 'serious comedy'.

Psychological Study of His Characters

Almost all protagonists of Narayan's novels are blend of individual and type. They are individual in the sense that they have a similar quest for identity with the intention to reach the reality. In course of their journey to their goal they are allowed to cross an angry river of difficult situations, twist and turns, and several ups and downs of their human fate. They suffer from apprehension, weakness and nervousness coupled the pressure of unfavourable circumstances, which ironically enough, help them to grow into spiritual maturity. They are typical for the reason that they represent the living human beings in the contemporary context and donot look alien at home, at least at last when they vanish into life. As already pointed out by R.K.Narayan's fellow

novelist. Santa Rama Rao, that the ultimate aim of the Hindu is not to attain happiness in the Western sense, but desirelessness. Narayan's protagonists right from " The Bachelor of Arts" to his latest novel. "A Tiger For Malgudi" (Chandran and Raja) are engated in a perpetual struggle to attain spiritual maturity as well as psychological consistency. However, Narayan hardly imposes Freuden psychology on the analytical study of his characters. He applies general psychology meant to read and analyse the workings of ordinary people's minds. These ordinary people of middle class families have a mark potential for the uncommon and this mentality leads them to mental aberration. They are unable to control the unusual flow of their minds, which become obsessed with peculiar ideas. For instance, Margayya's greed for money and happy living brings him in face of shaky circumstances which draw him away from his original self. He comes to normal condition of mind only when he has paid enough for his greed. Sampath in 'Mr. Sampath' is a printer by profession and his company with Srinivas is likely to yield good result through the Weekly paper 'The Banner'. But Shanti becomes instrumental in getting him deviated from his routine self. He forsakes his own duty and undertakes to participate in a film-venture, 'The Burning of Kama' - He even persuades Srinivas to write the film - script. The shooting of the film is disrupted by an artist Ravi who also works for 'The Banner'. Raju, in 'The Guide' also starts as an ordinary shopkeeper of books but his unbriddled imagination forces him to become a tourist guide. It is here that he comes in contact with Marco and his dissatisfied wife, Rosie, who help him in

his development to become extraordinary. Rosie is a clearheaded married woman whose dissatisfaction with her husband induces a feeling of revolt in her. Raju, a rogue in the garb of a tourist guide, takes advantage of this shaky relationship between the two. He is a past-master in the art of perception. Moreover, Rosie's own ambitious nature helps Raju in winning her attention and assuring her that all is not lost for her. When Marco, the archeologist scholar, comes to sense the illegitimate relationship between Rosie and Raju, he has no choice but to abandon her at the Malgudi station. She comes to Raju whom she considers a friend in need. She is received there without ifs and buts. It is later that Raju's mother and maternal uncle object her presence and donot allow her to continue the practice of dance. Raju revolts against the social code and Rosie's company brings him into precarious conditions, which he is unable to control. Narayan seems to imply that the individuals like Raju are always in trouble because they easily take up the suggestions of others so much so that their personalities appear to be the products of other people's convictions. Raju is extremely susceptible to what others suggest and this plasticity of response not only determines his career but also the ultimate destiny. Raju's metamorphosis from shopkeeper to tourist guide to inflatuated lover to impresario of dance to jail-bird to yogi to potential martyer is a sort of escapism which is happily recognised as great box-office material by cinema studios. Dr. C.Paul Verghese is right in his statement that

"Raju is more complex than any other character of Narayan's novels. In him we find the craftiness, dishonesty

and credulity of Margayya and the fleshy bombast of 'Mr.Sampath', the adventurousness of Mali in 'The Vendor of Sweets', the romantic excess of Sriram in 'Waiting For the Mahatama' and the mystical learning of Chandran in 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 21 Srinivas in 'Mr. Sampath'".

Dr. Nirmal Mukerji finds Narayan an implicit moralist whose satire has no bite because he seems so satisfied with the Indian world he ridicules. Absurdity and fantasy are so closely woven with realism, particularly in respect of characterization that his major characters, while well-developed, appear to be elusive. They try to embody truth without being true to life. Raju, Margayya, Sriram, Natraj, Raman, Sampath, Srinivas and even the Hermit and Sambu are made of the same stuff. The Hermit who transforms the inner being of the tiger in "A Tiger For Malgudi" is developed so comprehensively that he outmatches Chandran and Raju. Fantasy and realism are so interwoven successfully that it is difficult to infer in which way the wind will blow. However, the recurrent pattern in character - growth as cited by Professor Rajeev Taranath, remains the same in all major novels of Narayan (from average to extraordinary to a more poignant state of average). 22 It is definitely in the end that almost all the protagonists of Narayan's novels come to understand that individual aberrations may be tolerated for sometime by society or the gods, but they are bound to be eroded at last for the sake of realizing the fact that the actual life on this earth requires harmony, balance and proportion. And herein lies the greatest achievement of the novelist, mainly so because he is a moral analyst and

a dedicated artist who knows how to improve the individual.

It appears that Narayan's great concern is with the individual's improvement, and if that happens, society is likely to be benefitted by such improvement.

Krishnan the bored intellectual of 'The English Teacher' who could 'dawdle over the attendence for a quarter of an hour" (P.9) is flabbergasted by the crueltest blow. He escapes from a routine-job in order to enrich his life with his beautiful wife Sushila who appears to him a "phantom of delight" (P.49). This Wordsworthian happiness is thwarted by Sushila's contracting typhoid, eventually resulting into her death. Krishnan embeds himself in a slough of despond: "Nothing else will worry or interest me in life' hereafter". (P.108). He becomes a "Professional receptacle of condolence" (P.109) until absurdity - fantasy ungrips him and he begins to receive telepathic messages from the soul of his deseased wife. As a spirit she bubbles over with ecstasy and her philosophical discourses in the main to distinguish between the material and immaterial worlds make Krishnan more heavy-hearted and suicidal until he learns to ease up from effort and attention and is receptive to psychic phenomena. Krishnan and Sushila are the embodiment of a charming and creditable couple whose marital trials and treasures are touchingly sketched in the realistic segment of the novel. When she becomes a blithe spirit and begins to join in the nightly contacts with her husband, the pathos is too strained to be taken for granted.

The anonymous as well as insomnious Headmaster in

The English Teacher' who runs an experimental school for the

children on the 'Leave Them Alone System' is the only other important character besides Krishnan's daughter Leela. His rejection of his own churlish wife and shabby and noisy children in addition to his preparation for the predicted death are in total contrast to Krishnan's happy married life, that remains happier even after the death of his wife. Undoubtedly, the Headmaster is an amalgmation of absurdity and fantasy and hardly appears to be the creature of the real world.

Margayya in 'The Financial Expert' has been hailed Narayan's supreme creation todate. There is no doubt that the main characters appear to be little better than caricatures, they are in accordance with the subject of the novel. In the five parts of the novel, five phases of Margayya's developments are presented engagingly. In the first phase of his development he is introduced as a financial adviser to the peasants. He sits under a banyan tree in front of the Malgudi central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank and transacts business with a grey, discoloured, knobby tin trunk. In the second phase of his development he rises to be a prosperous publisher, in collaboration with the printer Mr. Lal. of 'Domestic Harmony' ('Originally called 'Bed Life' or the science of Marital Happiness"). In the third phase he is seen a financial adviser and money-lender to the peasants having his own office in Market Road. The fourth phase of his development brings him to be the financial wizard who is seen heavily engaged in receiving deposits and paying fabulous rates of interest. And the fifth phase brings out Margayya as 'insolvent' with

a prospective return under the same banyan tree wherefrom he had started.

Margayya's son, Balu has a close resemblance with Mali in 'The Vendor of Sweets'. Dr Pal who offers Margayya, the book on 'Bed Life' to publish subsequently becomes instrumental in bringing about his downfall, Professor Tyengar rightly points out:

"There is a certain chain of Nemesis in the intersecting relationships between Dr. Pal and Margayya, the apostles of sex and money". 23

Vasu and Natraj in 'The Man -Eater of Malgudi' are a close contrast to each other. Vasu seems to be the reincarnation of Kailash-Sampath-Margayya Raju. His arrival in Malgudi on the one hand in a symbol of disturbance to Natraj, his companions and particularly to Sastri, on the other it signifies how precious a wild-life is existing in Mempi forest. He is a taxidermist by profession, but to Sastri he appears to be a rakshasa on account of his strong fighter like body and wild tastes. He has "a tanned face, large powerful eyes under thick eye-brows, a large forehead and a shock of unkempt hair, like a black halo". (P.13). Vasu is a symbol of a demon in search of more and more power. But he wants to seek this power through science and knowledge. He boldly tells Natraj : "After all we are civilized human beings, educated and cultured, and it is upto us to prove our superiority to nature. Science conquers nature in a new way each day : Why not in creation also ? That is my philosophy sir. I challenge anyman to contradict me". (P.15) With this philosophy he begins to ravage nature and stuffs Natraj's attic of the press with carcasses of different kinds of animals and birds. He is a threat to religion, social order and peaceful order of Malgudi town. The spirit of the town is keen to save her people from the tight crip of a living monster. He dies at last under mysterious circumstances and the novel acquires the suspense of a detective novel.

Narayan has already given hints about the way Vasu is likely to end. Natraj, Sastri, the poet, the journalist and the temple woman, Rangi - all are loveable characters who come in contact with Vasu and learn about objectionable activities.

There is always a sense of fear prevailing in Malgudian world after Vasu's arrival, and placidity is restored only after his sudden death. His end is mythicalized with that of the Hindu mythical demon, Bhasmasur.

'The Vendor of Sweets' presents a more advanced character, Jagan who is a sweet-vendor by profession but a Gandhite and a follower of the Gita in his thinking and conduct. He is not a practical man endowed with worldly wisdom and commonsense. His very first sentence contradicts what he says and what he does:

"Conquer taste and you will have conquered the self" said Jagan to his listners, who asked, 'why conquer the self?" Jagan said "I don't know, but all our sages advises us so"(P.7). It is ironical that Jagan is speaking against his profession. He is a sweet-vendor and if people conquer their taste, his sale may be in danger. But he is little concerned with this

practical philosophy of worldly wisdom. Jagan is Gandhian in his dress, food, habits and daily spinning. But his son, Mali is just the opposite. He is a representative of the ultramodern American-returned youngmen who do not believe in anything Indian except money. Mali has no scruples, knows no morals, and is given to all kinds of sinful activities. He has returned from America with Grace, a half-American and half-American woman and a grandiose scheme to manufacture novelwriting machine. He has no regard for Jagan but he is extremely hopeful to extort the whole money the oldman has got under his possession. Jagan's alter ego is his 'cousin', a confidant, an advisor, an emissary extraordinary and an expert manager in an emergency. When Jagan comes to know about Mali's sinful union with Grace whom he brought to India with a promise to marry but didnot marry at all, he is extremely disappointed. Under such conditions he finds unable to live with his son. Moreover when he learns that Mali has been arrested for the illegal possession of liquor, the cousin is authorised to take the necessary step. But Dagan adds significantly, "A dose of prison life is not a bad thing. It may be what he needs now . (PP. 191-92).

Jagan is a bundle of simplicity and shrewdness, candour and fussiness. He has a capacity to become otherworldly and this-worldly at the same time. At sixty he is reborn and enters a new birth symbolically, for he is ready to give up vending sweets and watching a goddess come out of stone. Mali is a blend of absurdity and fantasy and realism is alien to his personality.

In 'The Painter of Signs' (1977), 'Second Opinion' (1982) and 'A Tiger For Malgudi'(1983) Narayan keeps the same pattern recurrently in the delineation of his characters. Raman and Sambu appear to be made of the same stuff. They are blend of absurdity and fantasy and realism is also hardly wanting in their personalities. Raman lives in the world of fantasy and is unable to cope with such a dominating as well as obsessive beloved as Daisy. As Rosie in 'The Guide' was obsessive with the idea of dance so is daisy with the idea of family planning. Raju falls because of Rosie and his own ambiguous nature, Raman also gets a lesson eventually to get rid of woman and march towards the Boardless - "that solid world of sublime souls who minded their own business" (P.183). In 'Second Opinion' there is no heroine at all and Sambu and his mother are presented as poles apart. Both present a contrast to each other - mother symbolizes the old and the son the new.

In the latest novel 'A Tiger For Malgudi' Narayan presents Raja, who is not a human being but a ferocious tiger.

He is shown to possess the same eço as is found in human beings. Though Raja is incapable of audible speech, it is made of eço, values, outlook and the ability to communicate. Narayan himself points out in his introduction of the novel:

"Why tiger ? Why not a mouse ? asked a smart journalist who had come to interview me, when I mentioned the subject of my novel. I could only reply, "so that the chief character may not be trampled upon or lost sight of in a hole".

Another important character in the novel is the 'Tiger Hermit' who employs his power to save Raja and trans-formshim inwardly. He is a mystic and the master of meditation, entirely different in Nature in comparison to other pseudo-saints of Narayan's previous novels. He is a sanyasi who has renounced everything and undergone a complete change of personality. He has freed himself from all worldly possessions and human ties so much so that he does not allow his abandoned wife to stay with him in the Mempi forest. It is on account of his strange psychic power that he is able to overcome Raja and transform his inner being. The captain of 'Grand Malgudi Circus' and his wife are no better than caricatures. His wife comments, "He has lost all sense of humour, the slightest upsets and he flounces out, let him - - I don't care. Only animals seem to be fit for his company". (P.38).

It is, therefore, obvious that Narayan's world of Malgudi abounds in eccentricities of its people. Inspite of their oddness and incongruities, they appear to be real people of flesh and blood. Women characters are comparatively weak but Narayan doesnot give portraits of exceptional men and women characters. Besides the chief characters, the minor characters are also depicted from the lower class of people of South Indian society. The blacksmith burglar and his wife Ponni in 'The Dark Room', the cartboy and his companions in 'Swami & Friends', the common clients of Margayya in 'The Financial Expert', Gafur in 'The Guide' are some examples of this unimportant section of society.

As is obvious from these characters Narayan is, to a great extent, a traditionalist in the matter of characterization. He is fully conscious of his limitations and that is why he doesnot attempt to draw any character with whose psychology he is not familiar and who does not come within his range. Dr. Harish Raizada is right in his incisive observation that Narayan is concerned with depicting.

"Man in relation to God, to politics, to abstract ideas passed by him; it is only when he sees him with his family and his neighbours and that his creative impulse begins to stir to activity".

These wonderful characters are the source of Narayan's creative amusement which is restricted to his own class, mentality and conviction. There is explicitely a norm of excellence blow which he cannot possibly lower himself. That is way, sex, violence and pornographic details are beyond his depiction. He is a moral-analyst who advances the genux of Indo-Anglian novel considerably with his resolution of his unique handling of character, focus on the individual identity, and his Indianization of East-West theme. It is only within his capacity to handle the subject of life after death and that of the existence of soul in every creature of this world, no matter whether the possessor is a human being or a ferocious tiger. His characters are South Indians but they "have their kinship with all humanity".

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治疗失疗症 治疗治疗 CHAPTER - IV

The Element Of Local Colour in Narayan's Fiction :

Local colour, as a matter of fact, is a faithful delineation of situations consisting of characteristic details of dress and dialect, customs and conventions, and manners and movements of the protagonists. The home-bred Narayan is frequently referred to as the Indian Faulkner because all his novels and short stories are set in one principal locality. The mythical town named as Malgudi is the unique creation of this novelist who is rooted in the Tamil- and Kanada- speaking South. Narayan was born in Madras and has spent most of his life in the Mysore area, he deals with his own province of South India. where bizarre folk-types work and worry and where the cyclical view of life emerges with surprising uniformity. All this fairly accounts for the provincialism in his fiction. On the one hand, this provincialism is a good trait because it provides continuity and skilful handling of local colour. On the other hand, it is not so good in respect of limiting his subject-matter and eventually resulting in a circumscribed view of life. However, Narayan seems to insinuate that the life of the whole world is a compound of millions of little lives, and the death of the whole world is also a compound of the deaths of these millions of little beings. In other words, life in its essentials is the same everywhere inspite of outward differences of customs, traditions, conventions, rituals and rites. For example, Mulk Raj Anand tells the

stories of Punjabi-speaking people in his fiction and establishes their identity by translating their speeches into English.

Narayan does not do so deliberately. He remains a regional writer in the sense that he seldom goes beyond his own region of South India represented by Malgudi.

It is a recurrent insinuation in Narayan's fiction that Malgudi is a town meant for tourists. It has got beautiful spots — hills and forests, groves and culverts, caves and shrines — which attract tourists and taxidermists to come over here and explore the town so as to make it more famous than it would have been before their arrival. For example, Marco in 'The Guide' comes to Malgudi as an archeologist and explores the caves and shrines. Vasu in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' focuses his attention on exploiting the wild life of the town. Narayan uses the element of local colour in asserting the seenic beauty of the town and exhibiting the heart of Mysore. Raju in 'The Guide' reveals this fact:

"Malgudi - - had manythings to offer, historically, scenically, from the point of view of modern developments --- if one came as a pilgrim I could take him to dozen temples all over a district with a radius of fifty miles. I could find holy waters for him to bathe in all along the course of the Sarayu, starting, of course, with its source of Mempi peaks". 1

Mysore is called Indrapuri of India on account of its historic and scenic beauty. Like Narayan's enchanting town of Malgudi, it has also manythings to offer both historically and

scenically - the river Cauveri, Chamundi Hill, temples, shrines, forests, gardens, culverts, fountains, tanks, circuses, and zoo- which find considerable reflection in Narayan's fiction with a deceptive simplicity.

Malqudi is famous like Narayan's native city Mysore.

Its forests are fertile for teak, sandal wood, bamboos, birds and beasts, animals and fruits. Fields are full pf paddy, sugarcane and coconut trees which are so common produces of South India. As Mysore is a city of beautiful gardens, Malgudi is also redolent with scents and flowers. Jasmine and sandal wood dominate the fragrant atmosphere of the town. The leitmotif is depicted with reference to jasmine in 'The English Teacher' when the bereaved Krishnan begins to establish contact with his demised wife, Sushila:

"There was overwhelming fragrance of jasmine surroun-2 ding her, "still jasmine-scented", I commented".

South Indian Women are fond of bedecking their locks of hair with beautiful flowers - a peculiar fashion prevailing from time-immemorial in South India. In 'The English Teacher' Sushila and Jasmine are associated throughout the novel.

(PP- 18, 57, 64, 70.).

The Mempi hills have deep ravines 'quite inaccessible to human beings'. (A Tiger For Malgudi':P.31). Malgudian forests can be identified with Karapur forest, situated at a distance of thirty-five miles in the Southern part of Mysore. This forest is well-known for beasts and elephants more particularly

as they are cought alive for Mysore Zoo and princes. The tea-plantation is also done in Mempi forest of Malgudi. All such details reflect South Indian colour in general. But as the element of local colour cannot be limited to the geographical condition of the place, Narayan comprises social and religious conditions of South India, drawing the picture of economic worries of his later protagonists appearing in the novels from 'Mr. Sampath' onward.

Thus, apart from establishing the identity of his setting, background and atmosphere Narayan uses the element of local colour in his characterization. All his protagonists hail from South India. Narayan uses his subject-matter from his own region of Tamil-spoken people who are also accustomed to speak common English language. In 'The Guide' Rosie is asked by Raju's mother:

"Do you understand Tamil ?

She replies, "Yes. It's what we speak at home". (P.90).

of dress and dialect. Narayan doesnot give the impression of deliberate use. Since the honest and dedicated writer is bound to exploit the possibilities of his own knowledge and experience, Narayan does so authentically. He imparts South Indian hue to his characters who are chosen to play the assigned roles in the resolved limit of Malgudian atmosphere. These South Indian characters are chosen from the Hindu middleclass families which are rooted in Indian Hindu traditions and age-old customs,

beliefs and superstitions. Inspite of the pressure of modern western culture, the Indian traditions have got their own values to be granted. They are reflected through ceremonials, festivals, fairs, customs and conventions, manners and mannerisms.

Festivals and ceremonials

The Navaratri festival is celebrated in 'The Dark Room'. Savitri, the heroine of the novel has a stock of fine dolls and toys to be used on this festival. As it is traditional to invite neighbours and relatives to participate in the celebration, Narayan depicts this scene realistically and shows how such festivals are significant in uniting the whole community together. In 'The Guide' the Dushera and Diwali festivals are described in order to draw the picture of happy moments when anybody becomes of everybody. Raju, during the phase of sainthood is oblivious of the count of time, is reminded of these festivals by his disciples when they offer him gifts:

"When his disciples brought him sugar-cane and jaggery cooked with rice; when they brought him sweets and fruits, he knew that the Tamil year was on. When Dasara came they brought in extra lamps and lit them, and the women were busy all through nine days, decorating the pillard hall with coloured paper in tinsel; and for Deepavali they brought him new clothes and crackers and he invited the children to a special session and fired the crackers". (P.90).

Narayan presents a factual criticism of life by showing how innocent villagers are being tempted by a false saint on the one hand. On the other, they themselves are prone to be victims of such a fraud. Their superstitions belief in the divineness of a saint and his mysterious powers has led them traditionally to rely on what he says. But the tradition of festivals in the society still continues to highlight the eternal values of Indian society. In 'The Man- Eater of Malgudi' the temple function about which the fuss is created by Vasu also indicates the spirit of the people to believe that Unity is Strength. That is why, Natraj and his companions are able to stand together against the evil-doer Vasu who intends upto the last to disturb the normal order of the Malgudian society.

clash of Cultures.

Inspite of the fact that Narayan has neither dealt in fashionable modes of fiction nor in the themes of eye-catching topicality, he has remained balanced in showing how individual and society are baffled by clash of cultures. Instead of criticizing the existing contradictions of present day society of South India, he has presented ironical view of the whole situation. The newly-adopted wasternised system of education is also satirised in the first triology of his earlier novels—
"Swami & Friends", "The Bachelor of Arts" and "The English Teacher". Besides the defective system of education, the biased attitude of teachers who are either fanatical or egocentric in their approach is depicted logically so as to arrive at the purposive conclusion. What happened in christian schools and

colleges during the British Regime and the repercussions on the minds of Indian students and teachers are realistically presented through Albert Mission School and the College of the same name. The teacher like Ebnazar, Mr. Brown and Krishnan seem to represent the whole class of the profession. Since the environment of the institutions is unsuitable to students, they are at liberty to while away their time in endlessly nonsensical pursuits such as bundling up their opponents and throwing them into Sarayu as in 'Swami & Friends' is planned by Mani the Mighty-Good-for-nothing, or displaying a sense of total reluctance to learning as is done by students in 'The English Teacher'. The result is hopelessness among a large section of students.

Impact of Western Culture.

The western culture has played havoc in the South Indian society in respect of overwhelming the old social values. The result is that well-established old institutions of family and marriage are badly affected. In 'The Dark Rook' the western values arise from an opposite source of a feeling of oppression. The natural sorrows and pains suffered by a tongueless creature as Savitri indicate how the housewife of a middleclass family is compelled to dream of freedom and die heart-stifled in her den. She is able to adjust with her bully and licentique husband only when a part of her is 'dead'. The western made of culture makes deep inroads in later novels which present the study of money-hunting men of the world. Narayan shows how Indian society has been considerably influenced by the western way of living and leading life in a similar way. In 'The Guide' Raju's

involvement with Rosie is the cause of his rising temptation to elevate his career by hook or by crook. His disregard for old-established order and belief that one should not develop relations with another man's wife results into a critical state of being imprisoned and disgraced. In 'The Man Eater of Malgudi. Vasu's arrival becomes a threat to Malgudian culture and Natraj and his companions along with a large crowd have encounters with him till he is destroyed by his own ego. All this indicates that medium class society is still unable to overlook the self-styled man who ransacks their peace and freedom. So long as such a man as Vasu or Raju is working within undisturbable limit, the society doesnot bother at all. But when people find that personal freedom causes disruptive to impersonal freedom or freedom of masses, they are not supposed to revolt violently against the person concerned, something miraculous happens and the cursable person is destroyed by his own tempo. What Sastri speaks about Vasu is the revelation of people's faith :

"Every demon appears in the world with a special boon of indestructibility. Yet the universe has survived all the rakshasas that were ever born. Every demon carries within him, unknown to himself, a tiny seed of self-destruction and goes up in thin air at the most unexpected moment. Otherwise what is to happen to humanity?"

Horoscopic agreement was necessary in terms of marriage in South India. The earlier novels, 'The Bachelor of Arts'

and 'The English Teacher' have recurrent references to horoscopic solutions before a marriage takes place. In 'The English Teacher' Krishnan's wife dies because their horoscopes were not in agreement and their marriage took place inspite of disagreement and deadly forecast. But in 'The Financial Expert' Margayya is ready to bribe the astrologer who can distort the horoscopic reality and enable him to get his son Balu married with Brinda, the daughter of a well-off family. This indicates a speedy decline in astrological faith of south Indian society to a great extent and its growing reluctance to temples, rituals and prevalent social conventions.

Money, marriage and the tangle of human ties are the burning problems of human worries in India, especially in the middleclass society which find depiction in Narayan's fiction. Marriages are settled on the basis of dowry, so-called agreement in horoscopes and the maintenance of time-honoured customs. Narayan's earlier novels have detailed references of them. But the new wave of western culture brings a radical change in the dogmatic attitude to marriage so much so that Sriram in 'Waiting For the Mahatama' chooses a bridge for himself without in the least bothering about horoscopes and other prevailing formalities to be observed in marriage. He tries to win the heart of his lady-love even at the cost of surrendering his whole being on the feet of Mahatama Gandhi. Bharati is also prepared to marry Sriram provided she gets Mahatama Gandhi's blessings. This indicates how unusual change in matrimonial affairs was brought about by the arrival

of Gandhi on the stage of India. Individuals like Sriram and Eharati could muster courage to throw off social traditions to winds. 'The Guide' reflects a radical change in the outlook of the individual who can go to the extent of discarding marriage proper and involve with a married woman for the sake of society. To Vasu 'Only fools marry, and they deserve all the troubles they get". (The Man-Eater of Malgudi: p.38) There is no difference between drink and marriage; both are same. If people like it, it is their business and nobody else's. In 'The Vendor of Sweets' the issue of marriage is highlighted and Mali and Grace who live in sinful union before having been properly married are not only cursed but detested severely.

In his latest novel "Second Opinion" Narayan tries to reflect the social curse of marriage in cradle. Sambu and his mother donot agree with each other in terms of marriage. The mother feels at a loss to see her son revolting against the orthodox agreement made in terms of marriage when he was hardly five years old. Narayan refers to the ills of child-marriage still prevailing in South Indian middleclass society. People are conservative, orthodox and have high respect for old values which have lost their validity in the present state of affairs. But they go on pleading that what is old is ever gold. The new generation of young boys represented by Balu (in 'The Financial Expert'), Mali (in 'The Vendor of Sweets') and Sambu in ('Second Opinion') is reckless, shameless and

twentienth century which has already witnessed the two world wars and the overwhelming partition. Old values have changed, yielding place to the new. Whether the whole picture of South Indian world is in consistent with that of Malgudian world or not, the fact is that the young generation of Narayan's world of fiction appears to be typical. Professor A.N. Kaul's views in this respect are agreeable when youngmen like Balu and Mali are taken into consideration. They represent

" - - the whole new generation of scooter-riding, alcohal, smuggling boys committed to get-rich-at-all-costs philosophy".

Such young sons are the symbol of engaging problems to their parents. Both Margayya and Jagan feel worried for their sons. Jagan as a father is not a perfect example of parenthood and authority, so is Margayya. Both spoil their sons because they are over-indulgent and have got no sense of real upbringing. Margayya is ready to get Balu educated by hook or by crook. Jagan also ignores the growing reluctance of Mali towards education. Instead of being closely watched and instructed rightly, Mali is sent to America. It is here that he begins to take pride in everything imported and deride Indian way of life altogether. Except Indian money, nothing interests him. It would not be an exaggeration to say that after returning from America Mali emerges to be an embodiment of all that is un-Indian in all his attitudes and values. His sinful living with half-Korean and half-American

cirl, - Grace symbolizes cultural topsi-turvyism, while his over-reaching project of producing a story-writing machine on a mass scale is an example of the absurd materialistic ambitions and the personal mechanizations of the west. The West has made deep inroads into Indian Hindu culture which is overwhelmed with unbearable threats to the institution of marriage on the one hand, and creative freedom on the other. Jagan is also a bundle of fads and self-contradictions in the way that he being a sweet-vendor advises to 'conquer taste' so as to cut the very branch on which he sits. Both Jagan and Mali are the symbol of several fathers and sons of middle class families which are being disturbed by too much of westernization. Human values are disregarded because people are oblivious of the great heritage of Indian culture. They try to become uprooted and the conflicts arise. Their real nature is covered by pretentiousness, platitude and sentimentality. Narayan, in the portrayal of young generation of Balu, Mali, Raju, Sriram, Sambu and Raman, indicates that the dualing nature of youngmen who are impractical in their attitude invites self-created troubles and disturbes normalcy and peace. These so-called westernized and self-styled youngmen are unable to cope with social conditions, existing from time-immemorial. They are selfassertive because they have no sense of community which pleads for the reiterated slogan of Unity in diversity. It is because they are acquainted with the life of the west where so much liberty exists and old ways are replaced by new ones, especially in terms of sex and sophistication. Without grasping the spirit

of the western culture they try to amass the raw materials of the western society and slip into slough of despond. Vasu in 'The Man- Eater of Malgudi' refuses completely to cope with the social traditions because he is a circus-man and endowed with a sense of opposing everything normal. Such self-assertive men are threats to all established order of Indian society. But as Indian people are deep-rooted in conviction and have faith in omnipotent God, such terrorizing people are not able to do much harm to society. They appear on the social plane like hurricane and meet well-anticipated fate.

Social Conditions Condition of Women

The condition of South Indian women attracts Narayan's attention and he depicts several social ills which are still prevailing in society there. In 'The Dark Room' he shows how traditional Hindu housewife is tormented by a self-built husband who can go to the extent of gadding with other woman, throwing his whole commonsense to wind. The whole family is disturbed on account of Ramani's love-affair. The arrival of film-industory in Malgudi disturbs the normal life of people in 'Mr. Sampath' so much so that a balanced and more sagacious man like Srinivas also falls victim to easy temptation and writes the filmscript. Sampath flirts with Shanti and comes to grief at last. Sense of proportion is the key-note in the presentation of women's conditions in Narayan's novels. There are traditional type of women who are the embodiment of piousness, submission to domestic affairs, and consistency of outlook in respect of

old Hindu culture of Sita and Savitri. On the other hand, there are rootless butterflies who feel a sense of pride in moving on the line of ultra-modern women and have mo hesitation in breaking the social norms. Savitri in 'The Dark Room' is contrasted with Shantabai, Sampath's wife with Shanti, and Rosie, Rangi and Daisy appear to be alienated from the traditional domestic norms. The Captain's wife in the recent novel is a close contrast to the hermit's wife. Narayan seems to insinuate that the Western way of living has changed the attitude of youngwomen like Rosie, Daisy, Shantabai and Savitri. Nevertheless, women are seldom ridiculed by the novelist who seems to believe that sexual pessimism or vulgar display of passion cannot be the overall features of Indian women. Narayan's doctrinal resolve not to rely on man-woman relationship in his novels and short stories has remained as firm as a solemn pledge. He is very often compared with Jane Austen who with her two inches ivory , her pride and prejudice, her sense and sensibility, populate her novels with husband hunting women. Narayan has got little of such problems to prtray in his fiction. Hardy may have inspired him in regard to the portrayal of Malgudi but women in Wessex novels are too different to be compared with women of Malgudi novels. Hardy's attitude to life is also different in comparison to that of Narayan. Hardy prefaces his "Tess of Durbervilles" with the following lines from Shakespeare's 'King Lear':

> "Like flies to Wanton boys are we to the gods They kill us for their sport".

and ends his 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' with the following line:

"Happiness is an occasional episode in the general drama of pain".

Sex is a dominating influence in Hardy's philosophy of life and there are almost a dozen seductions in his novels. But barring 'The Painter of Signs' in which Raman and Daisy lie together on a mat and perform the ritual willy-nilly, we have no seduction scene in the entire bulk of Narayan's fiction. Since Indian culture of the period of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat does not allow the overt play of sex, Narayan signifies that child-bearing and child-rearing are the chief functions of women in his novels. Shanti, Shantabai and Daisy are certainly exceptions to be found in his fiction. Therefore, with a few exceptions. Narayan's women are not too innocent like Tess to yield to the sensuality of villainous people like Alec. Nor are they too ambitious, mature and determined to resist the nonsense of Angel Clare, the clergyman's son. They remain as they are as traditional Indian women appear to be. Virtue for them lies in the perfection with which they acquaint themselves in the role allotted to them in life. Savitri in 'The Dark Room' returns home because she finds bonds of love stronger than her sense of revolt. She is in agreement with her destiny to live in the Dark Room both at home and outside. She deserts her bushand without any qualms of her conscience and is persistent in following the philosophy of Omar Khayyam :

"Dead yesterday and Unborn tomorrow". As women in middle class families have a subsidiary role to play, Narayan presents them as they are. They have got no vital impact at least in matters of policies and programmes. In matters of choice Narayan is throughly Indian when he asserts:

"You can only marry the girl you are destined to marry".5

Absence of Communal Animosity

Communal animosity is absent in South India while cultural differences are ubiquitous. This is why, Narayan's novels are free from the depiction of communal clashes which are so common in North India. It is only in a short story 'Another Community' that he portrays the scene of communal frenzy, which provokes the head-hunters to kill the innocent, nameless hero of this story. Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar has high admiration for this story as it is of national interest and wide public concern. 'It 'probes our endemic national disease, communal strife'.

In 'The Financial Expert' the central problem of cultural differences is stated, "why should we criticize what our ancestors have brought into existence? someone asked" (P.5). No change can be tolerated in regard to food taboos, caste privileges, and whenever it occurs it tends to implied criticism of existing traditions. Malgudi's citizens are reluctant to understand change and this rigidity is the root of hostility

Expert finds himself unable to dangle his legs from his indoor office chair because such furniture may cause nervous discrete. In The Vendor of Sweets Jagan has partially accepted Grace as his daughter in law, though a sort of mental conflict is always there in the bottom of his mind. This conflict is intensified by the revelation that Grace is not properly married to Mali and both are living in sinful union. From the standpoint of Western culture no question may arise to object this sinful union of Mali and Grace but Eastern culture prevailing from time immemorial in Malgudian society is unable to tolerate it. Such aspects of Western culture in the matter of sex are humorous embodiments of the more penetrating questions that have considerably perplexed the Indians trying to adjust to the modern world.

The Problem of Devadasis.

In 'The Guide' and 'The Man Eater of Malgudi' Narayan depicts Rosie and Rangi - the former as an educated who has succeeded in rising above from the wretched state of a traditional devadasi and her marriage with an archeologist has changed her misfortune while the latter is still a temple woman leading the life of a prostitute. In South India, especially in Karnataka this social ill is still existing and devadasis are very common in the name of traditional religion. The presentation of the problem of devadasis is not only realistic but also indicative of the fact how this social evil has been existing in Indian society from time immemorial:

"The so-called sacred prostitution of davadasi has been referred to by Alberuni. It was a very ancient institution - - Medieval literature - - refers to the institution of devadasi, but these sources scarcely attach any sacred character to the devadasi system - - - it is mentioned that the devadasis earned their livelihood from the temple - and that the profession and income accruing from it way heriditory - - - the temples employed more than one devadasi who took their turn while performing before the god". 7

In Karnataka the practice of devadasi has proved a burning problem and our government has shown deep concern to exterminate it from its very root. In Belgaon district the village Sandautti is still the very centre of devadasis who earn their livelihood by meens of prostitution and run the practice with a strange zeal. They are, as they are destined to be, the devotees of Goddess Yallamma. In his novels Narayan doesnot give detailed references to the practice of devadasis. Rosie only mentions that she belongs to the family of a temple woman while Rangi is presented serving as devadasi in the temple and tempting people to continue the practice of prostitution. The most important victim of her temptation is Vasu who is himself a devil-incarnate. Even Natraj fails to resist the temptation of Rangi's charm as he points out (The Man-Eater of Malgudi).

"She was dark, squat, seductive, overloaded with jewellery; the flowers in her hair were crushed, and her clothes rumpled, she had big round arms and fat legs and wore a pink

sari - - - Anyway, whatever may be the hour, every inch of her proclaimed her what she was, a perfect female animal .

But Natraj*s views are personal. Rangi is shot into life and ennobled in such a way as to present herself as a faithful devadasi to her profession. It is nobody else but Rangi who discloses the secret of Vasu*s intention to shoot the temple-elephant, Kumar. This disclosure is enough to warn Natraj and his companions to save Kumar and cope with the nefarious design of the man-eater. But side by side Rangi is shown to have growing reluctance towards the practice of prostitution. She would like to be the life-long mistress of Vasu better than to continue as a devadasi. It shows how a devadasi is fed up with the practice of prostitution and willing to get rid of her present hell. But alas Nothing comes out of such a fictitious hope. Her hope is sacrificed on the altar of her professional duty. She cannot allow Vasu to shoot the temple-elephant.

In 'The Guide' Rosie is presented as a developed character who has risen above from the status of a devadasi.

She herself tells Raju that she belongs

temples as dancers; my mother, grandmother, and, before her, her mother. Even as a young girl I danced in our village temple

--- we are viewed as public women --- We are not considered respectable; we are not considered civilized.

Rosie's mother planned a different life for her. She provided her education upto a post-graduation level because she had realized that it would enable Rosie to rise above the wretched state of a devadasi and get married with a man of status. The cherished hope of Rosie's mother was translated into a reality and Marco came forth as a man of status to marry Rosie. But, as it is usual Marco was induced to marry the daughter of a devadasi, but he failed to give her his whole heart as a husband. His intense attention towards paintings, ruins and old art prevented him from adjusting to a proper married state. He began to ignore a full-blooded wife, who easily fell a victim to Raju well-versed in the art of exploiting the situation in accordance with his choice and opportunity. The indication of the novelist is clear that such a man as Marco may show his sympathy and marry an educated devadasi but will not be able to adjust with her in domestic life. The adjustment requires a sense of balance between thought and practice. Marco who is devoted to lifeless images, stones, shrines and ruins and detached from conjugal pleasure is certainly bound to pay the unexpected penalty for his imbalance.

As the recent programme has brought to light the Karnataka government has started attracting the youngmen to come and marry the devadasis. Those who are unemployed are paid Rupees three thousand in order to establish their families. Something better is likely to happen to devadasis.

Caste - System - As caste-system has been prevailing in

India, Malgudi's citizens are shown caste-conscious. South Indians are also caste conscious and the middle class people of caste-Hindu prefer to be vegetarian so as to follow the tradition of their past. They are distinguished from people belonging to other sects in the way of their special preference to lead a conventional life. Since Narayan's range is limited and he presents in his novels a cross-section of varied humanity, preferably of Hindu middle class, he shows his characteristic concern to present the problems and predicament of people tormented by the flux of cultures. Caste - system in the past had resulted into a beneficial experience because people had concentrated to their particular duties graded by the system. But with the passage of time, as other cultures invaded the old Hindu culture of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat, a considerable change began to appear in the social set-up of India. Since the wake of independence the rigidity of caste-system has been extenuated by and by. Narayan's later novels - 'Waiting For the Mahatama', 'The Guide', 'Second Opinion', 'The Vendor of Sweets' indicate that the conciousness of the caste-system has lost its vitality. Sriram in 'Waiting For the Mahatama' prefers to marry a girl irrespective of caste and creed. Her beautiful figure blossomed with prime youth and noble character is a sufficient proof of her matrimonial qualification. The advent of Gandhiji on the Indian stage proved an overwhelming menace to the rigidity of caste-system. Nevertheless, caste has lost no identity. It is there, very much there in Indian Hindu society. It is only spiritually that the distinction of caste is not made.

The faith of common people who appear in Narayan's fiction is filtered through the conviction in traditional gods and goddesses, saints and seers, temples and shrines, priests and prophets. Even children are conscious of this faith. They are God_fearing as almost a large section of middle class Hindus is, throughout India. Narayan uses symbols to present the India of his own viewpoint. For example, the temple is the symbol of peace and serenity. Shrines and caves, rivers and pilgrimages help Hindu people to come together as a community and survive the old cultural past of India. People of towns are less credulous and orthodox than villagers who are easily befooled by fake saints and fraud priests, certain typically Indian traits, such as showing hospitality to the extent of inconveniencing the host as in 'The Man_Eater of Malgudi', 'The Guide' - Vasu is offered a free living in the attic of his press by Natraj and Raju greets Rosie warmheartedly when she comes to him bag and beggage after having been abandoned by her husband, Marco, and the astonishingly affectionate reception of Raju by villagers of Mangal_signify the richness and distinctness of Indian Hindu culture.

kinship with one another. They are selfish because their personal interests collide with the impersonal ones. As human nature is varied and man is said to possess double nature, he is bound to be at conflicting state of affair. Those who donot uproot themselves from the old links of the past lead a better life than that of rootless people who sink deeper and deeper into the mud of confusion and perplexity. This is not only

the condition of South Indian middle class men depicted in his fiction by Narayan but middle class society as a whole in India. Man is torn within when he is uprooted; he comes to grief when he, separated at all from his kith and kins, moves to a new world of experience and endurance. So long as the protagonists of Narayan's novels are South Indian and corresponding with their roots, they are free from mental aberrations pant-up hearts, and unnecessary worries of life. The moment they begin to abandon their normal way of living and looking at the world reality, they are nowhere. This is what is happening in India on account of muddle of several cultures into one.

Every-Day problems of Common people.

Problems of Common people - Narayan presents situations to raise the problems of everyday life of common people. He

refers to the problems of tenants and houseowners in 'Mr.

Sampath' and 'The English Teacher' and 'The Man-Eater of

Malgudi'. He presents a sagacious houseowner in 'Mr. Sampath'

who wears ochre robes and poses himself to be a sanyasi, living in a small room himself, troubling his tenants and street
people by occupying the water-tap situated in the street.

In 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' Natraj the hospitable owner of the press. attic is awfully terrorised by the so-called tenant as Vasu, Krishnan in 'The English Teacher' feels at a loss to contact the houseowner. Such problems are not only prevailing in South Indian society but also are very common in the rest of India emerging as a financially better country

than she was before independence. People are considerably troubled by the problem of a suitable-rented house. Those who are professional owners have made it a sort of business of bargaining. In 'Mr. Sampath' when Srinivas comes to Malgudi and makes contact with this deceptively cunning owner, he bluntly asks him,

" Tell me what you will pay. I have one for seventyfive, one for thirty, fifty, ten five, one. What's it you
want". 10

The houseowner is a cunning shark, a miserly fellow who would not afford to buy even a mat. To take bath at a public tap around which people including women and children wait for their turn suits to this owner more. He is not in the habit of paying attention to the genuine needs of his tenants. One of the tenants living in his huge house holds him by elbow and reminds him of his constantly engaging demand for another water tap. He is curtly told to quit the house. Thus there is the endless strife between the owner and the tenant, closely watched and experience by Narayan himself before 1953 when he entered for the first time in his own house. Therefore, the problem of rented-houses and the position of a tenant and his relation with the owner - all are first-hand experiences of the novelist who indicates how South India is in no way different from the rest of India. Middle class people are always haunted by such problems and have to cope w with their destined position in society. Even the small towns like Malgudi have become overcrowded with outsiders who shift from other places and settle therein. The problem indicates

how middleclass people have limited incomes and means and find themselves unable to afford costly living in colonies and extensions. Therefore, the problem of living to them is the outcome of their limited economic means at their disposal. In 'The Guide' Raju and Rosie live in a mansion like house in Lawley Extension only when they have amassed enough wealth. Now their social position does not allow them to live in a poor old house. Raju is aware of the rising status he has acquired in course of time, and he can not afford to live in a house having been designed for a shopkeeper: He points out:

"My father had designed this house for a shopkeeper, not for a man of consequence and status who had a charge of growing celebrity". 12

This is why, they move to New Extension where the two-storied house, with a large compound, lawns and garage proves suitable in keeping with their elevated status.

The vagaries of private bus are significantly dealt with both in 'Waiting For the Mahatama' and 'The Man Eater of Malgudi', Natraj's returning journey from Mempi tea-shop of Muthu to Malgudi gives a glimpse of the whole picture and indicates how buses are overloaded with passengers and how conductors extort money in the process.

Ills of Dowry: The birth of a daughter is hardly rejoiced in the middle class family. The reason for this reluctant

supposed to bring her up with a haunting desire to face the unbearable demand of dowry from bridegroom's side. The stock of the bridegroom is to rise in accordance with inflation and the advancement of New civilization. How an optimistic father of a bridegroom is to declare that new in investment in housing, whose value can never come down, the most secure 'gilt-edge' is an unmarried son. Things are contrary to those who happen to be unfortunately the people from bride's side. The father of a son in this way appears to be a seller and that of the daughter a buyer. Undoubtedly, matrimony in Hindus more particularly has become a seller's market. An enthusiastic father like Narayan himself who had only daughter, Hema Narayan to marry, could have easily expressed his chagrin before the seller of a son:

"My daughter is a priceless possession. I have had her for sixteen years now, I don't know how I am going to be without her. She is valuable as far as I am concerned and even if you pay me a price of ten lakhs, I would still feel unhappy to part with her, and so I am not selling her; I shall give her away provided you satisfy these two conditions. I must have a confidential report from one of the daughter—in-law in your house, on the outlook and conduct of the elders at home, and I want a psychologist to examine your son and give him a certificate of soundness". 13

But it is hardly possible for a middleclass Indian father of a daughter to open his mind so freely before the

parent who has groomed a son properly to the extent of sweeping the honours in all examinations. One who is selected for an administrative career is the actual dictator of the prices these days.

Dowry has proved a curse in society. Innocent daughters of poor fathers who are not able to concede the surmountable demands of the bridegroom's parents fall victim to murders, brutal attacks, and constant retribution.

Narayan suggests that there is hardly any way to abolish dowry because the victim himself being an abettor. If it is made illegal, a blackmarket is bound to evoke from repression. If sell-tax is levied on the transactions involving a bridegroom, it may again presumably shifted on to an already overburdened father of a girl. Therefore, it is worthwhile to recognize the institution and workout a table of payments and presents in order to provide at a glance the liabilities to be incured by a would-be Sambandhi:

"First class in competitive examinations:

Rs. 45000 plus a 20 H.P. motor-car, model not earlier than

October 1953; engineering graduate: Rs. 15000, jeep, plus a

miniature locomotive in solid gold; M.Sc. (Nuclear Physics):

Rs. 15000, plus five acres of land containing thorium, lignite

etc; pilot with "A" certificate: Cash, plus a helecoptor for

private use; third class B.A., without any property: Rs.5000,

plus a bycycle or an autorickshaw (if he chooses to make a

living out ofit)".

There may be some degree of difference between conditions in South India and in the rest of the country, but there can be no denying the fact that the middle class people are in the tight grip of this dreadful monster of dowry.

Married girls, particularly those whose parents are unable to afford the desired dowry are not only belaboured inhumanly but also ought to face the ordeal of being burnt alive. Such incidents of dowry-cases have become voracious news in magazines and newspapers these days. How painful and ironical is it to imagine.

"Marriages are, ofcourse, made in heaven but they are a business in our part of universe, -- ".15

South Indian Food, and Manners.

South Indian people are fond of special type of food in their dishes that they differ in this particular mode from their fellow-brothers in other provinces of the country. Almost all protagonists along with minor characters of Narayan's fiction retain their South-Indianness intact in the matter of food. For instance tiffin is a special kind of food taken by South Indians. It includes rice, a few chhapatis, Sambhar, curd and a fried vegetable. In other provinces of the country where Hindi is the first language to be spoken of the tiffin is the food container. Narayan's Malagudians depend on edibles which are primarily produced in South India, and in this way, they are easily distinguished from other people of the country. Coconut, masal dosai,

pickles, idli, bonda, rice are very common produces in South India while they are alien to other provinces of the country. As South Indian Hindus are generally vagetarians, having little preference to wine, meat and non-yegetarian diets, characters of Narayan fiction seldom use them. There are only three characters, in the entire bulk of Narayan's fiction, who are fond of alcohol, prostitution and what not. Raju in 'The Guide' indulges in drink and gamble, Kailas in 'The Bachelor of Arts' finds no objection to a life of eat, drink and be_merry. The dismissed engineer appearing in the recent short story: You had no business to pawn my scalp" is also depicted as a drunkard and debauch frequently abusing his neighbours for not sharing their conjugal pleasures with him. But they are exceptions, the majority of his Malgudians is non-vegetarian, god_fearing and altogether the people of South India. Frequent references to Madras, Coimbatore, Mangolore, Bangalore and nearby villages, such as Kalapore, Mangal, Sukkur, (appearing in 'Mr. Sampath', 'The Guide', 'The Dark Room') etc. draw the picture of South Indian Society and display how religions and make_believe culture has been dominating the people living therein .

South Indians have a special taste for coffee.

Coffee helps according to them, in concentrating the mind.

In 'The Man_Easter of Malgudi' Narayan introduces Mempi Tea

State and Muthu, the tea-shop keeper, with a view to giving

the glimpse of an important South Indian produce. It is

considered very important in social life. Narayan points

"--- Coffee in South India (in the North they favour tea), its place in our social life, --- would be the warning uttered at their back, "Their coffee is awful', how at wedding parties it was the responsibility of the bride's father to produce the best coffee and keep it flowing all day for five hundred at a time; how decoction drawn at the right density, on the addition of fresh warm milk turned from black to sepia, from which ultimately emerged a brown akin to the foming edge of a river in flood. --- Coffee making is a task of precision at every stage".

In 'The Dark Room' a picture of house kitchen is drawn, showing how the hero, Ramani feels embarrassed for having been provided

"Brinjals, cucumber, radish and greens, all the twelve months in the year and all the thirty days in the month."

He snubs Savitri for having 'tormented him with this cucumber for the dozenth time. Ramani is 'eccentric' and 'lawless' in his taste. It is not the repetition of cucumber which irritales him so much but because it is the 'cheapest trash in the market' (P.6).

The supremacy and the tranquilizing qualities of South Indian food can be discernible when one finds the opportunity to have a dinner in South India. The most important varieties of South Indian food are :

pickles and plaintain leaf and so forth.

Narayan points out :

"I'm more than ever convinced that the South Indian diet marks the peak in the evolution of culinary art and that the South Indian, however well he may be received, will never feel really at home anywhere in the world unless he can have his spices too within reach."

Himself a vegetarian at all, Narayan suggests,

"--- the eating of beef may not sound abnormal in most part of the world, but in India where the cow is a sacred object, beef cannot be eaten, no rationalization is ever possible on this subject".

Inspite of all such details as mentioned already,
Narayan doesnot give the impression that he has used them in
his fiction in a parochial mood. They all indicate how sincere
and devoted he has remained on his background, atmosphere and
has relied tremendously to the first-hand knowledge. His
broad humanity, magnanimous attitude, detachment to all that
which is conducive to disturb the traditional way of living
and looking at the world reality, sympathetic yet penetrative
eye to distinguish between the virtuous and the vicious, and
his ironical humour with a profound comical vision have helped
him in emphasizing the unique features of South Indian locality
symbolized by Malgudi.

David Cecil is right in stating that

" - - - A novel is a work of art in so far as it introduces us into a living world; in some respects resembling

the world we live in, but with an individually of its own.

Now this world owes its character to the fact that it is

begotten by the artist's creative faculty on his experience.

His imagination apprehends reality in such a way as to present

us with a new vision of it. *20

R.K. Narayan is a superb artist whose some aspects of rare experience fertilize his imagination, with the intention of striking sufficiently deep down into the fundamentals of his personality in order to kindle his creative spark. That is why, Narayan's achievement is limited to that part of his work which deals with the aspects of his experience. However, the problems of the South Indian society in respect of social, political and economical spheres are touched upon incidently, indirectly and within the framework of Malgudi.

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CHAPTER - V

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Narayan &s a Regional Novelist

SAGA OF MALGUDI

Professor P.P. Mehta suggests that R.K.Narayan "can be called the father of the regional Novel in India". (1) At the very outset it should be remembered that R.K.Narayan moved away from the general tendency of the fiction writers in India, who wrote at that critical period of the Nationalist's Movement for Freedom, He showed little concern to Political Novel but concentrated his attention on the mood of comedy, ' the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, the crisis in the individual soul, - the resolution and above all the detached observation. For him all these aspects constituted the stuff of fiction, but they were unobstrusively forced into the background by his predecessors. Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao dealt with political fiction, being largely concerned with social and political ills of the country. Narayan worked in a different direction and hoped to express through his Novels and short stories the way of life, of the group of South Indian people with whose psychology and background he was most familiar. He had bright hopes that such a picture was bound to appeal to his own circle and a larger reading public outside.

R.K.Narayan has created a wonderful region through his
Novels and short stories named as Malqudi. There is hardly any
doubt that he would have drawn inspiration for creating this
hypothetical region from great masters of English and American
fiction - Thomas Hardy. Arnold Bennet and William Faulkner -

who enriched their fictional world with Wessex, Pottery Town and Yoknapatwapha. Like Hardy's well_known Wessex Narayan's Malqudi is quite familiar to every reader of his fiction.

Professor K.R.Srinivas Iyengar has admirably a high opinion of Narayan's Malqudi. He states:

" - Malqudi is Narayan's Casterbridge', but the inhabitants of Malqudi - although they have their recognizable trappings, are essentially human, and hence have their kinship with all humanity. In this sense, Malqudi is everywhere." (2)

Malqudi is whether in South India or everywhere depends

very much on the penetrative perception of the reader and the

sagacious critic who happen to find a convincing reflection

of Narayan's hypothetical town in the world at large. It is

a very small town in comparison to the locale of Thomas Hardy

which is populated with the peasants and the farm workers who

are tormented with the relentless designs of human fate.

William Faulker's Yoknapatwapha, in comparison to Malqudi, is

also a bigger world because there struggle between the blacks

and whites involves the past, present and future and precipitates the violent action time and again. In this way, despite

of its Universality and engaging beauty Malquid is a much small
er place.

-- Compared to the vague vastness of Hardy's Wessex or the dark immensity of faulkner's Yoknapatwapha --- moving from Wessex or Yoknapatwapha, we move from a tropical jungle to the municipal park. (3)

Professor Tyengar's observation can be agreeable to the earlier no vels of Narayan, but his latest fiction presents Malqudi as a bigger world than the municipal park. It is a world where the beast is able to realize that he is a divine soul, not only the forbidden exterior of a ferocious body. It presents a sort of mental pilgrimage to a spiritual aspirant who is allowed to be solaced by a master-minded hermit with a tiger speaking in the human idiom. Therefore, Malqudi of Narayan's latest novels and short stories is certainly a bigger and mystericus world than the old Malqudi of earlier novels.

How surprising it is that Malqudi does not exist on any map except in the world of Narayan's imagination. Dr. Nirmal Mukerji is said to have drawn the map of Malqudi in her Ph.D dissertation which is still unpublished and hence unknown to a larger section of reading public. Another map of the town was also drawn by an American Professor, giving all physical details of the town, its surroundings and its recurring landmarks. R.K.Narayan, as he himself informs, found it extremely charming.

Man American Professor came to Mysore. He had drawn a map of Malqudi for his students; it was very very charming. I liked it. (4)

But surprisingly enough, Narayan's plan of the town of Malqudi is hardly charted except in his mind. He is seldom confused to put something different in the same places in different books. He clarifies to Susan E. Croft of France that the question of confusion does not arise at all.

• ___ because my mind is very clear about that, I have a very good picture in my mind. (5)

This town of Malgudi was first introduced in 'Swami & Friends' (1935) and since then it has been appearing in every novel and short stories of Narayan written todate, growing in importance and gaining in definition. In the earlier novels this region is shown with its immortal landmarks - the river Sarayu, hills and forests, groves and culverts - and the world of students and teachers, quite whimsical in nature. The world of boys and children, with their childish pranks and distracting illusions and hysterics, castes and sects, religious outlook, their inevitable relationship with their friends and the family is explored in 'Swam' & Friends' and 'The Bachelor of Arts'. The intensity of true love and life after death are treated with a deeply - felt experience in 'The English Teacher'. The Dark Room' presents Malgudi as a Semi-Westernized World. It is here that the Western way of life begins to make deep inroads in the lives of Malgudians. To get in love with another married woman is not considered sinful now. Malgudi has advanced in status and now it is no longer the world of school and college boys. But one thing is there - there is hadly any disturbance caused by horrible second World War. What has caused trouble in the domestic affairs of people is the arrival of a new wave of realism. The result is that some ultra_modern people begin to behave abnormally. In later novels, from Mr. Sampath' onward Malgudi is corrupted by outsiders who come to this dreamland and intermix with the natives. The new wave of so-called modern culture invades the silent pools of

Malgudi and it all results into the topsy-turvy of social obligations. Children, nurtured in modern culture start revolting against their parents and the age-old social customs and conventions. Husbands do not hesitate to betray their wives; men are victims to the glitter of actresses and 'femmes fatales'. Conflicting claims of the world and the spirit are able to sway the herces tremendously. Despite all such disturbances in Malgudi, there is a hope of bright spark in the minds of people. It is nothing but the spirit of Malgudi which brings harmony and fulfilment of positive hopes. No outsider like Vasu in 'The Man_ Eater of Malgudi' can play so long with the sentiments of its people.

Malgudi is a developing town but it is not so big as Madras.

It has the offices of both the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police. In 'Swami & Friends' Rajam's father is the

District Superintendent of Police who lives in the Official

Colony, Lawley Extension. In 'Waiting for the Mahatama' both

the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police are
introduced to attend the meeting organized under the Presidentship of the Municipal Chairman, Natesh, to welcome Mahatama

Gandhi in Malgudi. 'The Man_Eater of Malgudi' mentions the Superintendent of Police listening to the complaint of Malgudians

against the self_styled taxidermist, Vasu who had not only ravaged the wild life of Mempi forests but also had threatened to

kill Kumar, the sacred temple elephant, with his gum.

Malgudi is also a seat of judicial courts, as it is told in 'Swami & Friends' that the courts are closed in the second week of May when the sun becomes unbearable. The adjournment

lawyer figures both in 'The Guide' and 'The Man_Eater of Malgudi.

It is whimscicality and wretchedness of living which cause trememdous trouble to his clients.

"Clients who went to him once never went there again, as they sneezed interminably and caught their death of cold; asthamatics went down for weeks after a legal consultation. It is clients preferred to see him as he lounged about the premises of the district court in searth of business, and he tackled their problems standing in the veranda of the court or under the shade of a tamarind tree in the compound. But he liked his inexperienced clients first to meet him at his office and catch a cold.

I (Natraj) tried to dodge his proposal, but he was adamant that I should meet him in the narrow room above the cotton shops (6)

Malgudi is heightened in importance by a Central Jail,

P.W.D.Office and its Circuit House. Sriram and Bharati in

'Waiting for the Mahatama' and Raju in 'The Guide' are forced

to spend their term of captivity in its Central Jail. In 'Swami

& Friends' the Executive Enginear 'Mr. Krishnan' is shown to

have complained against his hard outdoor duties. In 'Waiting

for the Mahatama' Mahatama Gandhi is not allowed to be lodged

in the Circuit House where the Malgudians wanted him to be

accommodated. There seems to be a District Hospital in Malgudi

because in 'Swami & Friends' Hospital Road is introduced.

The Municipality, a Town Hall, a Town Public Library and a reading room, a clock Tower - all enrich Malgudi with their wide public use. In 'Swami & Friends' we hear of Taluk Office

whose gong strikes the hours in "The Dark Room" and 'Waiting for the Mahatama also. In 'The Financial Expert' Margayya's son, Balu is sent to the Higher Elementary Town School. There are two High Schools in Malgudi — Albert Mission High School, and Board High School appearing in 'Swami & Friends', 'The Bachelor of Arts', and a degree college, Albert Mission College where the hero of 'The Bachelor of Arts' graduates and Krishanan in 'The English Teacher' works as a reluctant teacher. There is no dearth of printing presses. In two different novels — 'Mr. Sampath' and 'The Man — Eater of Malgudi-these presses are deceptively run by Sampath and Natraj. A weekly journal 'The Banner'edited by Sri Nivas is published here.

Malgudi has also developed as an industrial town. A mill manager, Mr. Hental is mentioned in 'Swami & Friends'. Mr. Retty, another European also owns a mill here. Two weaving mills and a Mill Road are introduced in 'The Bachelor of Arts'. Co-operative stores and National stores are also important from the point of view of solving the problem of provision in Malgudi.

In 'The Dark Room' Malgudi flourishes in business on account of a branch of Engladia Insurance Company. Its manager is Ramani who owns a Chevrolet car and employs a lady probation—er with a view to securing business from women. There is er with a view to securing business from women. There is Engladia Banking Corporation introduced in 'Mr. Sampath' with a manager named Edward Shilling. The fund office is introduced in 'Waiting for the Mahatama' and Sriram's grandmother is shown receiving payments, there. The Central Cooperative

Mortgage Bank is the centre of Margayya's financial activities in 'The Financial Expert'.

Malgudi railway station is introduced in 'Swami & Friends' and it is further explored in 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'The Guide'. First of all Swami and Mani are shown on this station to see off Rajam in 'Swami & Friends'. Chandran's parents go to see off Chandran at this railway station in 'The Bachelor of Arts'. In 'The Guide' there is a detailed description of the railway station where Raju spent his childhood and learnt all pranks. It is here at this station where Marco and Rosic alight from the train and after several turns of their personal misunderstanding bid last good_bye to each other once and for all. It is here that we find Krishnan the English teacher to come at the station and receive his wife and child Leels dramatically. With the astonishing growth of Mempi Hills into a wellknown tourist centre, Malgudi railway station is extended and acquires more importance. Raju's whole career as a tourist guide begins from this station where he finds it more lucrative to act as a guide than to run an ordinary book stall on the platform.

There is no dearth of recreation centres in Malgudi.

There are two important clubs where Principal Brown in 'The Bachelor of Arts' is a member and Swami's father goes to play Tennis as described in 'Swami & Friends'. The Palace Talkies is the only cinema hall where both Tamil and English films are shown. It is here that we find Ramu and Chandran in 'The Bachelor of Arts'; Ramani and Shantabai in 'The Dark Room';

and the Principal Brown in 'The English Teacher'. The Boardless Coffee House is introduced in 'The Painter of Signs' and
Raman, the hero, finds here ultimate solare after having parted
with his lady-love. In 'Second Opinion' Sambu, desperate as he
is on account of his mother's fretful and ever-questioning
nature, finds solace at the Boardless coffee House where proprietor Varma entertains him with several cups of coffee without
charging a single Naya paisa.

Malgudi is a fast growing town on account of its direct connections with big cities, such as Madras, Coimbatore, Bangalore and Trichinopoly. The town had a legend of Lord Rama, Lord Buddha, Mahatama Gandhi who came here and brought about changes in the dull, old and conservative atmosphere of Malgudi. However, people of this region are hardly susceptible to radical change because the eternal culture of the town is so deep-rooted in their hearts that they are not allowed to peep into the altogether new wave of Western realism. If anyhow the younger generation comes under the influence of the Western culture, their happiness is enervated and they are astonishingly misled. So long as their root is preserved they are mentally healthy and show little inclination to imitate the Western values. The moment they are uprooted, their normalcy is at stake and they suffer from mental aberrations. Balu, the son of the Financial expert is controlled in his actions so long as he is under the guidance of his father. The moment he is with Dr. Pal, he easily hastens to prostitution and revolts against his father, tumbling down the entire edifice of his great business concern. But the unique

spirit of Malgudi helps in awakening the minds of almost all protagonists to get rid of their ulterior motives and shed self-ishness for ever. Their means help the ends. They learn at last that unselfishness is more paying provided they have the patience to practise it. Forgetfulness of self sounds to be the one great lesson to be learnt in life. The people of this region come to understand in course of their development that it is not only preposterous but also foolish to think that selfishness can make them happy. But for this they have to undergo a lot of struggle to arrive at the decisive conclusion that true happiness consists in the absolute killing of selfishness. There is none to make them happy except themselves.

Narayan, being a regional novelist of higher creative sense, chose his own region of South India to be reflected through the town of Malgudi. As a regional artist, he emphasizes some unique features of his locality and displays its uniqueness through various ways so as to make it differ from other localities. He relies on the process of constant selection and ordering of matererial. This process of constant selection and ordering of material helps the novelist in stressing the distinctive spirit of this chosen region and displaying a sense of wisdom that despite innumerable irrationalities in it life in its essentials has an unquestionable similarity. The differences which are presumably on the surface tend to help in revealing similarities, from the particular and the local so that the artist could be able to rise to the general and the universal. In this sense, Narayan succeeds as a regional novelist in the higher creative

sense.

(II) His Recurrent References to Malgudi

Narayan applies a special method in establishing the reality or concreteness of the town of Malgudi. For this he does not give a detailed description of the town at any time but he lets the landmarks emerge with the help of long familiarity. In 'Swami & Friends' Albert Mission School, the Sarayu, the Municipality, the Town Hall with a clock Tower and a club are introduced to form the framework of Malgudi. The world of Malgudi, despite a little disturbance of the Nationalist Movement for independence in which Swami and his companions also participate, more in a jovial mood to arouse laughter than the spirit of revolt and violence, is a happy world of childish pranks. This childish prankfulness is converted into a holiday—mood and romance when a well—equipped theatre brushes aside the Old Corrugated — sheet — roofed variety hall. It is still the pre—independence world of 1935:

"Malgudi in 1935 suddenly came in line with the modern age by building a well-equipped theater - the Palace Talkies - which simply brushed aside the Old corrugated - sheet - roofed variety hall, which from time immemorial had entertained the citizens of Malgudi with tattered silent films". (7)

Because these places are closely connected with the characters in the way they use them in accordance with their inclination and propensity. We tend to know and recognize the banks of the river Sarayu, Nallappa's grove, Mempi Hills, and, within the town the Palace Talkies, Lawley Extension, Market Road, the railway station, the statue of Sir Frederick Lawley.

Boardless Coffee House, The Truth Printing Press, Albert Mission School and the college of its name, Board High School, Central Jail, Malgudi Grand Circus and the well_known Zoo.

Engladia Insurance Company, Regal Haircutting Saloon, the Cent_ral Cooperative Mortgage Bank, Anand Bhavan, Modern Lodge,

Malgudi Photo Bureau, the Suburban Stores, Malgudi Cricket Club_all are closely related to the protagonists of Narayan's Novels and short stories. A host of streets and bylanes are connect_ed with the Market Road which is the lifeline of Malgudi. Mrs. Holstrom Lakshmi points out.

their character and distinctiveness through the people who live there and who are the main characters in the novels. Lawley Extension is described in the early novels as the place where the rich, respectable, mainly Brahmin families live --- the New Extension where Rosie and Raju live, after Rosie becomes famous, the enormous showy houses such as Neel Bagh, the house of the Chairman of the Municipality (in waiting for the Mahatama) "whose massive gates were of the wrought iron patterned after the gate of Buckingham Palace'. Kabir Street one of the Oldest parts of the town". (8)

Through incidents involved with the places Narayan tries to familiarise them to his readers in order to make them more homely than to let them exist for their own sake. Detailed descriptions of lane and bylanes are seldom thrust upon to exhaust the curious patience of the sagacious reader. For instance, the eccentric behaviour of the community living in

Kabir Street is described with a view to bringing to light how the people are aggressive and revolting in matters of different tastes in relation to compositions. Natraj tells in 'The Man _ Easter of Malgudi':

"I remembered a boy, a brilliant fellow, who strode up and down Kabir Street singing Tyagaraja's compositions for three days and nights continuously —— They seized him and bundled him off by the five O'clock Express to Madras. He was friend of mine in my schooldays and confessed that he had sung Tyagaraja's compositions only because he was keen on letting the people get an idea of the versatility of that great composer, but now he was afraid even to hum the tunes in his bath. Our Kabir Street citizens have exacting standard of sanity." (9)

In a series of novels Narayan draws the picture of different streets and buildings and gives an explicit account of the life and relations of variegated South Indian communities amicably living together therein.

Malgudi is explored in every detail in order to give a clear-cut view of the town. And therefore, every new novel and short story unfold the possibilities of this region in the manner of providing a glimpse of changing times and conditions. For instance, names of Streets, parks and extensions are changed and nationalized in the honour of the birth of independence in the short story, 'Lawley Road':

the town became a wilderness with all its landmarks gone." (10)

In 'The Guide' the town grows in importance because it attracts the attention of tourists, who come here in order to know it historically, scenically and from the point of view of modern developments. There are more than a dozen temples all over the district within a radius of fifty miles. The river Sarayu is highlighted as a sacred landmark having its source on Mempi Hills. In 'Waiting for the Mahatama' the town is visited by Mahatama Gandhi in order to preach the message of castelessness and untouchability, leaving the nationalist agitation aside. The repeated references to Malgudi become worn out. In 'The painter of Signs' Malgudi is compared with Newyork and in 'Ar . Sampath' with Switzerland . The family _ Plan_ ning movement highlighted in 'The Painter of Signs' echoes the knell of the state of emergency in the country. In the latest novel, 'The Tiger for Malgudi' (1983), Malgudi becomes a wonder_ land because myth and reality are so closely_knit together that a ferocious tiger named Raja narrates the story and amazingly declares himself as a living soul. Mempi forest is explored and an explicit glimpse of a rich and attracting life is given. Two landmarks of engaging attention are introduced to extend the town. Malgudi Grand circus and the Zoo are depicted to clarify that Malgudi is in reality the symbol of Narayan's own hometown - Mysore more than Madras, Coimbatore and Bengalore which are frequently identified with the town. The

circus is shifted from Poona after the death of its real owner.

Dadhaji. The Captain who is the authorized heir to Dadhaji
assures the municipal chairman that if he is allowed to start
circus in Malgudi, the town would be put on the world map.

He tells the Chairman:

"Just to show my roots are here, although I must confess that I had thought of perpetuating my benefactor's name originally. Hereafter Malgudi will be the home for hundreds of animals and scores of acrobates and performers of all kinds. You will be proud of it." (11)

On account of having a circus and the Zoo Malgudi gives the glimpse of Mysore which has the river Cauvery instead of Sarayu, and Karapore forest in place of Mempi forest. All such recurrent references serve to establish the concreteness or reality of the town which, as Professor Tyengar suggests, appears to be the only here in the entire bulk of Narayan's fiction.

(III) A Study of the Landmarks of Malgudi Major Landmarks of Malgudi

SARAYU - The river Sarayu, the Mempi Hills, Mempi Forest and Nallappa's Grove form the major and abiding landmarks of Malgudi. Sarayu has its ancient history and is considered by the Malgudians a pious river. They go to its sandbanks early in the morning for ablutions. It is some ten miles walk from Ella.

man Street, the last street of the town. In 'Swami' and Friends' Sarayu can be seen from the Town Hall as it is customary to take the distinguished visitor there and show him the flowing river in the moonlight. 'It gleams like a silver belt across

the North'. (P.)

It was Lord Rama who came to Malgudi and created the river Sarayu by pulling an arrow and scratching a line on the earth. The history of the river is given in 'Mr. Sampath'

"He rested on a sandy stretch in a grove and looked about for a little water for making a paste for his forehead - marking. There was no water. He pulled an arrow from the qui-ver and scratched a line on the sand, and water instantly appeared. Thus was born the river Sarayu." (12)

Characters are sentimentally attached to Sarayu. In The Bachelor of Arts Chandran finds Malathi on its sandbank and falls in love at first sight. In 'Swami & Friends' the naughty boys - Swami and Mani gather at the river bank and plan to bundle off Rajam into the river. Sriram in 'Waiting for Mahatama' also finds solace with her sweetheart Bharati here. In *The Dark Room * Savitri when driven out of home tries to end her life by jumping into the river. Raju, the rogue converted into a saint, collapses in the sacred water of the river. He is spiritually awakened here and turned into a martyr. To Natraj in 'The Man_Eater of Malgudi' the river serves no more than a resort to take ablutions and meet various sort of people on its sandbank. In addition to the main characters, Sarayu serves the pastoral community in several ways. They utilize it for irrigation; cattle graze and drink water. Therefore, the river symbolizes the timeless quality of Indian spirit reflected through the unbreakable continuation of the town of Malgudi. In 'Mr. Sampath' Narayan highlights the immortal quality of the river which is able to wash clean all the terrible impressions

of the past. Dynasties rise and fall in course of time, palaces and mansions appear and disappear, the whole country is invaded under the scourge of tyrant and outragious invaders, but sarayu's overflowing bounds are able to wash away all past impressions of sorrowful nature.

In his latest novel, 'Second opinion' Sarayu finds a disputable discussion between Sambu and his mother. The mother recalls the days gone by when she used to live near Sarayu in Kabir Street. It

our house — the river used to be much nearer to us in those days — it is somehow moved away so far out. When well were dug people became lazy and neglected the river; and no wonder she has drawn herself away; though in those days you could touch the water if you stretched your arm through the back door. (13)

Sambu does not relish the idea of his mother being a young chap rooted in the so-called philosophy of escapism and renunciation. Even the Tiger Hermit in 'A Tiger for Malgudi', who lived formerly in Ellamman Street by the riverside, speaks out that he got inspiration for renouncing all possessions from Sarayu. His renunciation was very much on the line of Siddhartha ---

"They searched but gave up eventually, concluding that I was washed off in the Sarayu, which was in flood at that time." (14)

Therefore, the river Sarayu being a major landmarks

of Malgudi influencesall Malgudians in one way or the other,

For children like Swami and Mani it is no more than a mere

piece of entertainment. Chandran is attached to the river roman—

tically and Savitri has a sacred feeling to plunge into it and

get salvation at last. This mysterious river flows peacefully

like the constant moving of the Universal wheel of Time, indi—

cating that the life of the cosmos moves on and on without

beginning and and. The perpetual attachment of Malgudians with

the river is very much owing to its timeless quality and the

sacred legacy of the past, the period of the Ramayana.

Mempi Hills and Mempi Forest

Mempi Hill and forest occur and recur in the majority

of Narayan's novels. In 'Mr. Sampath' Sampath finds a romant_
ic resort at Mempi when the whole scheme of the shooting of

film is altogether disturbed by Ravi. It is here that his so_

called cousin _ keloved shanti parts with him for ever. In

'The Guide' Sarayu is referred to be "Starting, of course with

its source on Mempi Peaks." (15) Mempi Hills grows in import_

ance when it is explored in a series of novels. There are

intermittent references to tea estates on Mempi Hills, ruined

temples and of 'half a dozen jungle tribes on its top. In

'The Guide', the "spacious bamboo jungles of Mempi" are inform—

ed and Marco comes here to take rooms in Mempi Peak House on

the topmost cliff;

There was a glass wall covering the North Veranda, through which you could view the horizon of a hundred miles away. Below us the jungle stretched away down to the valley,

and on a clear day you might see the Sarayu sparkling in the sun and pursuing its own course far away. This was like heaven to those who loved wild surroundings." (16)

Mempi Hills is one of the important landmarks of Malgudi and being so it is connected with the railway station of the town by means of buses and taxis. We hear of Mempi Bus Transport Corporation in 'The Man _ Eater of Malgudi. Natraj's journey to Malgudi from Muthu's tea _ shop confirms this fact. It is from Mempi Hills that Marco collects material for his archelogical book. There are ruins with 'Crack Plasters, broken idols and crumbling bricks and the bungalow on top with all glass sides:

wild game prowling around." (17)

Mempi jungles are explored by Vasu in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi. Being a taxidermist his arrival sounds like a menace to the wild life of Mempi forest. There is a village named as Mempi village at the foot of the hills, and it consists of a single winding street, being half 'a mile away' disappearing into the ranges of Mempi.

The wild life of Mempi forest is depicted at length in the latest novel. 'A Tiger for Malgudi'. The tiger Raja who is enlightened into a living soul by his Master _hermit recalls his early days as a cave-dweller and a jungle beast. It is here one gets a clear view of Mempi forest populated by a large variety of birds, animals, reptiles, beasts and other strange

creatures best known to the Zoo - keeper. Since Mysore is rich for wild life too by having Karapore forest and other ones surrounding the city. Narayan seems to make the best use of the local material in his latest novel "A Tiger for Malgudi".

Despite bamboo jungles, coconut trees and tea estates, Mempi is rich enough for its wild life. Rabbits, foxes, squirrels, monkeys, apes, jackals, porcupines with their dangerous quills, hyenas, garudas, kites, vultures, eagles, crows, leopards - all live here like different families as human beings live in the populated areas. There are beautiful streams and valleys, rivulets and culverts, wild fruits and strawberries in Mempi jungles where endless game of wild creatures is played on. It is here that the old and sagacious creature like jackal can instruct the tiger to have amity with like creatures:

"The jackal continued ingratiatingly, " If you cannot discover to be enemies, why don't you consider to be friends? How grand could you make it if you joined forces - you could become supreme in this jungle - - and no one will ever try to stand up with you. - - If you combined you could make all the jungle shake." (18)

Kumar, the temple-elephant belongs to Mempi. Muthu, the tea - shopkeeper knows very well about wild life living there in the forest and has a close watch on hunters like Wasu. Thus, Mempi forest and hills are given the treatment of a historical place in the framework of Malgudi.

Nallappa's Grove

Nallappa's Mango grove also forms the major

lamdmark of Malgudi. Theriver Sarayu flows across it and cattle

cross the river with their bells tinckling. The cremation

ground is also here as described in 'The English Teacher' when

Krishnan gives an account of the whole view:

I put on a shirt and an upper cloth and rushed out along Ellaman Street, crossing at Nallappa's grove. As I passed it I could not help looking at the Southern wall of the cremation ground far-off. --- Jingling bullock carts, talkative villagers returning home from the town and a miscellaneous crowd on the dusty path leading to Tayur Road on the other side. (19)

These major landmarks of Malgudi region have an abiding value of their own. They are situated beyond the populated area of the town from time immemorial and have sustained all upheavals brought about by critical times in the history of mankind. Professor K.R. Srinivas Tyengar is right in his incisive interpretation that

there is something - the 'Soul' of the place - - that defies, or embraces, all change and is triumphantly and unalternably itself. All things pass and change: men and women try to live, and even as they are living they are called upon to die: Names change, fashions change, but the old landmarks - the Sarayu, the Hills, the jungles, the Grove - remain. "The one remains, the many change and pass". (20)

Minor Landmarks

Schools and Colleges :

The three early novels of Narayan - 'Swami & Friends', The Bachelor of Arts' & 'The English Teacher' - are focussed on school and college life of students and teachers. Albert Mission School, Albert Mission College and Board High School are the three institutions in Malgudi. They are important because it is through them that the true idea of the academic life of the town is formed. These institutions run on the British Pattern of imparting education to South Indian Students are not only disappointing but also have Christian intolerance. There are intolerant school teachers, arrogant priggish schoolboys, and therefore, the town is disturbed. But they are the pride of Malgudi in the sense that every new visitor to this place may see how the world of schools and colleges is governed by new culture of the West. The fanatic Ebenezar stands as a fountainhead of inspiration to the generation of snobs who donot hesitate to cast their derogatory looks on everything Indian and the West in all praise for them.

Albert Mission College is situated at a stone throw from Sarayu. It has got a hostel where a few hundred boys can be accommodated easily. Krishnan in 'The English Teacher' lives in the hostel with his colleagues - Rangappa 'who teaches the boys Philosophy and Gopal who teaches Mathematics. Singaram is the old peon who has been a hostel servant for forty years and is known to all the teachers who are boarders since the time they were undergraduates. Principal Brown,

the English teacher, has remained as head of the institution for long because he appears both in 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'The English Teacher' .. Swami is a student who has got sad experience at both the schools - Albert Mission School and Board High School. Chandran is an und rgraduate at Albert Mission College headed by Principal Brown and Krishnan works as an English teacher in the same school. Therefore, the existence of these institutions is related to Narayan's protagonists through whom the inner life to be lived and experienced therein is explored humorously. Natraj in 'The Man_Eater of Malgudi', Jagan in 'The Vendor of Sweets' and Margayya's son, Balu in The Financial Expert' all happen to be the products of Albert Mission College. The Town Elementary School figures in 'The Financial Expert' where Balu is admitted and Margayya becomes its honorary Secretary. These schools and colleges are the reflection of the author's own experience which was bitter and suffocating. He still has got little sympathy for the outmoded system of education, its organization, outlook and aims. He expresses his views :

"Anti-educational". I am not averse to enlightenment, but
I feel convinced that the entire organization, system, outlook
and aims of education are helplessly wrong from beginning to
end." (21)

Whether anyone agrees to such views or not, Narayan has little changed his attitude towards education.

Apart from institutions, Malgudi is enriched by Municipality, which figures time and again in his short stories and novels both. In 'Lawley Road' the foolishness of the Municipality Chairman and his council to change names of street and parks in the wake of independence is highlighted. In 'Waiting for the Mahatama' Narayan draws a scene how at the arrival of Mahatama Gandhi in Malgudi the Chairman Natesh behaves hypocritically. Every same person living in this country is well-acquainted with some futile activities of Municipality. Apart from such trivialities, the Municipal Chairman indulges in removing the statue of Sir Frederick Lawley who is said to be "the scourge of Europe, the Nadirshah, with craftiness of a Machiavelli." (22)

Roads, Lanes, Streets, Extensions, & Sports.

Roads, lanes, streets and extensions occur and recur in Narayan's novels and short stories just to familiarise his readers about the framework of Malgudi. His method is to refer to them precisely in course of his narration. Since his characters use these roads, lanes, streets, spots, extensions, their existence becomes meaningful. Their descriptions are seldom superfluously mad for their own sake. The most important among Malgudian roads is Market Road which is 'The life-line of Malgudi'. (23) Market Road is connected with several roads, streets, lanes and bylanes which are woven in a sort of network behind the facade of this main road. It is here that Margayya, the hero of 'The Financial Expert' rises in his status and is able to have his independent office at Market Road.

"They reached 10 Market Road, and at once Margayya was enchanted. He had always visualized that he would get some such place. The Malgudi gutter ran below his shop with a mild rumble, and not so mild smell. But Margayya either did not notice it or did not mind it, being used to it in his own home." (24)

Market Road is a crowded place. There is a row of offices and shops, insurance agencies; local representatives of Newspapers, hair-cutting saloons, some film-distributors, a lawyer's chamber, and a hardware shop. Hundreds of people are to visit here everyday. It is here that Margayya is proud of calculating that if he can at least filter twenty out of that number for his own purposes, he would be more than well off. It has happened about an year that he has passed on to the grade of people who are wealthy and not merely rich. For him riches stand to be attained by any hard-working fool who has got some sense of watchfulness. But it is certainly an extraordinarily specialised job to acquire wealth. The meanings of money, riches, wealth and fortune have to be differentiated with subtlety and conviction. He is the real son of the soil of Market Road.

Market Road is connected with Vinayak Midali Street,
Grove Street, Lawley Extension, Fourth Cross Road, Ellaman
Street and Kabir Street. Ellaman Street is the last street
of the town. As early as in 'Swami & Friends' the unbreak—
able connection of Market Road with some streets is described
at the disappearance of Swami. His father goes in
search of him:

"Swamimathan's father felt ashamed of himself as he approached Ellamman Street, the last street of the town, which turned into a rough track for about a hundred yards, and disappears into the sand of Sarayu. --- He hesitated for a second at the end of Market Road, which was bright with the lights of a couple of late shops and a street gas-lamp before he turned to plunge into the darkness and silence of Ellamman street". (25)

There are thieves like Mari, (in The Dark Room') pickpockets like Raju (in 'An Astrologer's Day and other stories)
who are ready to exploit the favourable situations. Bangleseller (who appears in 'The Painter of Signs') has peculiar
delight in watching the wrists of charming women who make fuss
over the design of bangles.

Kabir Lane is connected with Market Road after some abruptive as well as disruptive turns. The Truth Printing Press is situated here. In 'Mr. Sampath, Kabir Lane is explored and connected with Market Road:

*Kabir Lane was such; if you took an inadvertent turn off the Market Road you entered it though you might not if you intended to reach it. Then it split into further into a first lane, Second lane, and so on. If you kept turning left and right you were suddently assailed by the groans of the treadle in the Truth Printing Works', "and from its top floor a stove enamelled blue board shot out over the street bearing the sign.

*The Banner'." (26)

Margayya lives in 10 - Vinayak Street. Vinayak Mudali Street is famous for its gutter into which the red-account book of Margayya is thrown by Balu. (27)

Rajam's father lives in Lawley Extension, (in 'Swami & Friends') named after the mighty engineer, Sir Frederick
Lawley. Lawley Extension, is the pride of Malgudi because here
sophisticated people and officials live far from the streets and
bylanes of common people. In 'The Guide' South Extension and
New Extension are described. Raju lives in New Extension in
a stylish house having at their disposal a large staff of servants, a driver for the car, two gardeners for the garden, a
Gurkha sentry "at the gate with a dagger at his waist, and two
cooks." (28)

Temples and shrines are also depicted with details as people of Malgudi have abiding faith in them. The temple is an embodiment of ancient culture and here people attain serenity and peace. In "The Dark Room," "The English Teacher" and "The Financial Expert" the worship of gods fulfils wishes and results into peace and prosperity.

Narayan, being a true Indian Novelist focuses his attention to village life. Savitri is taken to Sukkur village when Mari has saved her from drowning into Sarayu. Not only in 'The Dark Room' but also in 'The Financial Expert', 'The Guide' A Tiger For Malgudi' the countryside is described at length so as to evince how rural people depend on superstitious beliefs and indulge in quarrels and litigation. All such details form the framework of Malgudi town, and district which ever grows and changes and yet remains recognisably the same.

(IV) Malgudi: A Typical & Hypothetical Region of South India (Myth & Reality of Malgudi)

Several critics of Indo-Anglian fiction have tried to divulge the mystery of Malgudian region, identifying it with Mysore, Madras, Bengalore and Coimbatore, Professor Tyengar suggests asking:

" Can it be that Lalgudi, in Trichinopoly District, and fringing the river Cauvery, is the original of Malgudi'?" (29)

But Narayan quietens this suggestion given by Professor Lyengar. Malgudi was an earth-shaking discovery for him because he

would be necessary in writing about Lalgudi or any real place.

I first pictured not my own town but just the railway station which was small platform with a banyan tree --
On Vijayadasami I sat down and wrote the first sentence about my town. - - - The goddess of learning gave me the name."

(30)

It is thus clear that the idea of the town of Malgudi swam into the author's imagination more by chance than by consecutive planning. In this way, Malgudi is a hypothetical place, full of possibilities in accordance with what Narayan himself points out.

if you set your own town you are bound by the geography and its structure. But in a place like Malgudi, though the heart of city may, be fixed, it can expand." (31)

What Narayan states about the expansion of Malgudi can be verified by his successive use of minor landmarks: roads, sports, groves and culverts which appear in a series of novels, and expand the heart of the town. In his earlier novels Malgudi is a shabby town, but a considerable improvement occurs after independence. Malgudi is compared with Switzerland in 'Wait-ing for the Mahatama when the Chairman (Municipality) Natesh delivers a speech at the arrival of Mahatama Gandhi in Malgudi. In 'The painter of Signs' the town is compared with Newyork ironically enough on account of its expansion and growing population. Raman, the hero in the novel, surprisingly states:

"As if this were Newyork - - Malagudi was changing in 1972.

It was the base for a hydroelectric project somewhere on the Mempi Hills, and jeeps and lorries passed through the Market Road all day." (32)

Narayan's Malgudi, inspite of its imaginary character, appears to be a real town situated in South India. It is typical in the sense that it presents the life of common middle—class people who in no way differ from their counterparts in the real life. The world of Malgudi is a trouble free world where the world-makers and world-forsakers never cease to amuse the reader, mainly because Narayan has kept away from addressing himself directly, openly and centrally in his novels to any social, political or economical problem of the age. By and large he has confined himself to deal with the life of ordinary people living in the 'ivory tower' of Malgudi and having little sense of problems confronting the country. Their personal problems in regard to the life, romance, marriag

sorrows and joys are greater than National, Political, Social and economic problems of the day. However, they are charged with reality in the sense that their involvement in personal problems provides the drama of human predicament. For example, Chandran in 'The Bachelor of Arts' is in face of the problem of educated employment. The tyranny of astrology baffles him considerably when his horoscope does not match with that of his sweetheart, Malathi. Eventually he has got no alternative except feeling satisfied with the marriage arranged by his parents. There is no doubt that such problems have nothing to do with the national problems. Yet they are problems faced by any romantic youth of Indian background, in a similar condition. Even in 'Waiting for the Mahatama' the problem of romantic love and marriage is greater than that of the Nationalist's movement for fraedom. Sriram is more concerned with his baloved, Bharati than with Gandhiji and his Nationalistic problem of attaining freedom. We learn a great deal of Gandhian movement and his philosophy in 'Waiting for the Mahatama', but never beyond the framework of Malgudi region.

Narayan, in his novels, gives time to time mythological references. It is done in order to establish the oldness and the timeless quality of the town. Malgudi, having intermittent references to South India such as Thirupathi Hills, Madras, Bangalore, Mangalore, Coimbatore, provides a regional colour and indicates that life lived in this region may differ on the surface but in its essentials it is thoroughly Indian. For almost all the Pretagonists of Narayan's novels at last come to realize that happiness lies in the silence of desire

extinction of ego, and the forgetfulness of the outer self.

From time immemorial, India has been priding over this ideal.

Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee is right in her statement:

"Nothing could be more provincial and localized than the life of Malgudi town, yet R.K.Narayan achieves a universal vision through it." (33)

And this universal vision is achieved by means of broad outlook, artistic detachment and gentle irony. The moment one begins to enter into the World of Malgudi, he is enchanted by the scenic beauty of the place, its beautiful and widespreading smell of sandalwood, camphor, jasmine, the flavour of coconut and the homely atmosphere of the place. The town grows in dimensions like any other town of India, rising much above the confines of the South.

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CHAPTER - VI

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NARAYAN'S UNDERSTANDING OF MIDDLE CLASS PEOPLE

Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah points out that R.K. Narayan is 'a product of the Hindu middle class'. The whole corpus of his fiction is populated by the Hindu middle class people of his own province, differing in their attitudes, habits, manners, customs and conventions from the rest of classes - lower class and upper class. Narayan deals with the life of this particular class in his fiction, analysing the tensions and conflicts, stress and strains, in human relations within the domestic circle of his own experience, and making them the basis of his works. His early novels are all domestic in tone, presenting psychological studies of the relationships of husband and wife, parents and sons, brothers and brothers. Even in his last novels he again returns to domestic relationships exploring and delineating them to their considerable limit and presenting men more in relation to each other than in relation to God or some abstract idea or politics. Narayan is frequently criticized 'for his exclusive concern with the middle class and very often called 'treacherous' for not having dealt with the 'Indian poor and the dominantly peasant character of the country . But such criticism sounds not only meaningless but also baseless when his sincere point of view to deal with the class is taken into consideration. William Walsh is right in his description that

" - Narayan writes chiefly about the Indian middleclass because he is a member of it, and it is the class he understands best"2

These members of middle-class figuring in his novels and short stories are neither too well-off as not to know the rub of financial worry nor too poor to be brutalized by want and overwhelming hunger. By nature they are religious people, but seldom credulous like the poor or have-nots. They take religion with an easeful understanding, but they have a tendency towards modernity to the extent of murmuring their educated speech in older voices - 'Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, the spouse of God Vishnu, who was the protector of creatures', in the words of Chandran, the hero of 'The Bachelor of Arts' and Margayya, the hero of 'The Financial Expert'. Like various religions of the world their Hindu religion can also be divided into two classes - the religion based on sacred ancient scriptures (the Vedas, the Upnishads, the Ramayana and the Mahabharat and the Puranas), and the religion which results without texts. Narayan himself relying more on the spiritual understanding of religion, seems to have noted the division of two types of religion prevailing in his own province and the rest of the country. The religion based on scriptures has a stronger appeal to the common people who look askance at everyword that comes out to them without the authority of the sacred text. Common people of India believe in the religious saying that 'Dharma protects those who protect Dharma' and it destroys those who try to destroy it'. Gods, demons, ghosts and witches have a believable existence for them. As life is said to be a perpetual struggle between the forces of good and evil, the people of Narayan's fiction also believe in the endless struggle between good and evil. Almost every character of Narayan's

the hard core realist Vasu, in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' is not a total symbol of a demon. On the one hand he is a taxidermist, a demon incarnate in the words of Sastri, a huge man of six-feet whose 'fist was meant to batter thick panels of teak and iron', on the other, as Natraj has observed in this aggressive man of special design, "He had one virtue, he never hit anyone with his hand, whatever the provocation". There is no doubt that self-assertive people in society are disliked everywhere because their assertion is bound to cause a sense of fear. But they are seldom deprived of having no virtue in themselves. Here lies the balanced attitude of Narayan in the observation of human nature.

The majority of Narayan's fiction indicates that these members of middleclass are psychologically more active, their consciousness is more vivid and they live by virtue of their modesty, lacking in self-confidence. Inspite of some room for independent critical existence, they are always tossed in some kind of tension between this and that as deep source of power to improve their family, as in 'The Financial Expert' and 'The Vendor of Sweets'. Margayya in 'The Financial Expert' embarks on a journey to get-quick-rich and improve his social status; Jagan in 'The Vendor of Sweets' also tries to amass black money for his son Mali. In middle class families, old women represent 'Custom and Reason' and decide what is proper and what is improper. The family provides immediate context in which Narayan's sensibility remarkably operates. The joint-family

system which was considered Indian legacy in the past has presumably disappeared at present. In 'The Financial Expert' and 'The Man - Eater of Malgudi' scenes of family - disputes are drawn in order to evince how the new wave of western culture has swept away the human relationship in India.

Narayan himself points out:

"I fear that the rich subjective life of the individual against the background of that unique institution, the joint_family system, is a subject that has not been properly tackled - There is wonderful material here, whether the setting be the earlier political struggle or the present day political achievement".

And Narayan tackles this subject in his 'The Financial Expert'. When Margayya receives a card from Madras containing the incorrect information (incorrect as it is subsequently turned out) of Balu's death, his brother's family comes to his help and solace. Seeing them all in his house and realizing the implicacy of their feuds. Margayya's affected mind for a while forgets everything about Balu's so-called death and prompts a new chain of thought:

"-- a ridiculous question (addressed to his brother)
kept coming to his mind: 'Are we friends now - no longer
enemies? What about our feud?' A part of his mind kept
wondering how they could live as friends but the numerous
problems connected with this seemed insoluble. "We had got
used to this kind of life. Now I suppose we shall have to

visit each other and enquire and so on - - All that seemed to be impossible to do. He wished to tell him then and there:
Don't let this become an excuse to change our present relationship.

Margayya did his best to suppress these thoughts - - His brother whispered among other things: "We will send you the night meal from our house".

Such are the characteristics of middle class people and Narayan is not only well-acquainted with them but also has a personal experience of living under joint-family system from the outset to this day. In 'The Man -Eater of Malgudi' Natraj's complaint against his cousin who hates him for staying in their ancestral home is indicative of this family feud, brought about by the break in joint-living.

In the past (still to some extent) it was traditional to live together in joint-family system in India. All the members of a family were supposed to live together under the same roof, inspite of their minor differences. The old people in the family were in charge of laying down the policy with the intention of running the family administration smoothly. But modern culture has started breaking it up not only in the South but all over India. However,

* - - the sense of kinship is strong in a Narayan novel. The most notable example of this is - - Margayya and his brother, though for most of the time not on speaking terms,

are yet next_door neighbours, sharing a well, and in moments of special joy or sorrow simply cannot do without each other . 7

Apart from religion and family Narayan focuses his attention on private life, the ambitions, success and frustration of middle class people. These people try their best to achieve, in the words of Chandran in 'The Bachelor of Arts' 'a life freed from distracting illusions and hysterics". There is hardly any doubt about it that such "distracting illusions" are considerably woven in the fabric of Indian tradition. The crisis of consciousness and its resolution, more often than not, result into several mistake or frustrated attempts.

Amidst a net of human relationships middleclass people display their aspiration towards maturity. They are full of human weaknesses - their craving for money and status, their scepticism dualistic attitude towards life in general and their anxiety, reluctance to face the truth of their beings - which bring them appear to be made of real stuff of flesh and blood, as all human beings are made of . On the other hand, they are not deprived of human virtues. They are full of life and vitality. It is after personal experience of their self that they come to realize the truth of life. For instance, Chandran in 'The Bachelor of Arts' realizes the truth of life in his total surrender on the altar of parental love and returns to the old values of the middle class society in terms of marriage. Savitri returns to home and husband only when some part of her personality is already dead. Ramani continues to be the hypocritical husband and the unmitigated tyrant of the dark room. He is an exception which can also be

located in the real society populated by ultra-modern people uprooted from their old culture. Sampath, Raju, Natraj, Jagan, sambu - all are involved in their struggle to maturity to which they reach at last. The world of Malgudi cannot leave them as they are; it turns them what they should be.

Being a moral analyst and having a penetrative eye to look into human nature, Narayan is a past master in giving the reader a picture that strikes him as typical of everyday reality. In this way, he depends on selection and suggestion. He draws a picture of life in such a convincing way as to bring everyday reality. Human oddities, follies and frivolities of middle class people provided so much interest to the operative sensibility of Narayan that he seldom went for his subjectmatter beyond his own class. He paints with great skill the surface of life, the externals of characters and manners and passes by the vehement, the profound and the enthusiastic, all that is capable of humorous treatment. Like Jane Austen he worked within his narrow range and relied on his little bit of ivory so many inches wide, remaining a detached observer and testifying his profound vision of humanity. That is why, the inhabitants of Malgudi, despite their discernible local trappings are undenyably human, have their kinship with allhumanity. It is nothing but Narayan's artistic self-control, his broad humanity that enable him to achieve greatness within the limited range of his chosen field. And in this way, he achieves greatness.

various Types of Characters.

Inspite of his limited range the corpus of Narayan's fiction abounds in a galaxy of immortal characters. His convas is also limited because like a great artist he does not intend to overcrowd it. However, through his knowledge and experience he depicts students and teachers, journalists and printers. guides and tourists, the champion of emancipation and moneylenders, dancers and temple women, scholar and gramps, taxidermist and Sweet-Vendor, Painter of Signs and the arch-priestess of Family-planning, circus men and beasts and real saint and fake sanyasis with equal felicity and ease. His early novels present students and teachers, bank managers and domestic servants, femmi-fatale and the doting lovers who achieve maturity in the restricted limits of their operative zeal. From 'Swami and Friends' to 'The English Teacher' Narayan remained autobiographical in approach and plumbed the depth of his own memory. But from 'The English Teacher' onward,

"- we enter an exotic world of half-headed or half-hearted dreamers, artist, financiers, speculators, twisters, adventures, eccentrics, cranks, cinema stars, sanyasis, several of them not Malgudi products at all but straying or imported from outside".

Students And Teachers

Swami, Chandran, and Krishnan figure in the triology 'Swami & Friends' 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'The English Teacher'.

They represent the academic world of South Indian schools and colleges. In the first novel, we are introduced to a cheerful

world of young school boys - Swami, Mani, Sanker, Samual and Rajam. These boys are the students of Albert Mission School. It is through the eyes of the hero Swami that we also look at the fire eyed Vedanayam and the fenatic Ebenazar boasting too much for the merits of christianity and demerits of Hindu religion. But Swami & his companions enjoy their juvenile life, with quarrels and compromises, peels of laughter and quells of sorrow, and the important cricket match between the Malgudi cricket club and the Young Men's Union. Swami's parents and the old granny also play very important role in consoling him for the sake of going ahead. In 'The Bachelor of Arts Narayan takes the reader to the world of degree college youths who make a fuss over the problem whether historians should be slaughtered or not. Chandran, the hero, is a bright student of B. A. Class. After graduation he faces the problem of unemployment. During his aimless rambling on the bank of Sarayu he comes across the beautiful girl, Malathi, and instantly falls in love with her. Weak in women's psychology, Narayan fails to introduce any woman character in this novel except Chandran's mother who sounds interesting from the point of view of showing unwarranted rigidity and conservativeness on the maintenance of time-honoured customs of marriage. Malathi is informed only through passing references and discussions. Owing to horoscopic disagreement Chandran's marriage with Malathi is not possible. Baffled Chandran goes out for a change and becomes a Sanyasi for sometime. He returns home and agrees to marry any girl chosen by his parents. Narayan here indicates how typical customs

of marriage prevail in the middle class society of South India. with the ironic detachment of a true artist he presents the world of family in which human relations depend more on adjustment with one another than showing a sense of revolt. He portrays quite vividly the complex texture of social and religious customs and traditions, extremely governing a South Indian Hindu family. Obscure caste divisions, and sub-divisions, class snobberies. absurd marriage customs, blind superstitions and tyranny of astrological calculations - all are relentlessly prevalent in South Indian middle class society. The third novel of the triology takes the reader to the world of Albert Mission College in which Krishnan teaches English to notoriously careless students of undergraduate classes. Krishnan and his wife Sushila are an ideal couple, appearing in 'Mr. Sampath' as Srinivas and his wife, though placed in different circumstances. In this novel Narayan attempts to show the immortality of soul in Sushila's life after death. Professor Gajapathi, Sri Rangappa, Mr. Gopal, Dr. Menon are Krishnan's colleagues on the college staff while principal Brown, the Englishman, continues to appear again in 'The English Teacher' similarly as he did in 'The Bachelor of Arts. The psychic communion with spirit remains to be the important event in the novel.

Average Characters.

'The Dark Room' introduces Savitri who is the most loveable among Narayan's female characters. The poignant picture of a South Indian middle class family is drawn realistically to display how the life of an old-fashioned but sincere housewife becomes much of a hell owing to the frequent

fits of anger and irritation of her whimsical and bully husband Ramani. In this novel Narayan draws a pair of two opposite human beings who are tied by a matrimonial knot together socially, but they are unable to cope with each other. Savitri and Ramani are really poles apart in matters of taste, temper and in their respective assessment of social reality. The domestic confusion is worse confounded when a butterfly Shanti is appointed in Ramani's office and brings more misfortune to Savitri. Inspite of her revolt against the designs of her husband. Savitri is unable to bring any change in Ramani's nature. She agrees to live with her husband to lead a life of so-called domestic happiness only when some part of her personality is dead. Savitri has neither courage nor independence of spirit like Gauri, the heroine of Mulk Raj Anand's 'The Old Woman and the Cow', who is placed in similar circumstances of helplessness and hopelessness. Gauri, unlike Savitri, never thinks of committing suicide, but runs away from her husband's house to adopt the profession of a nurse in a clinic with a firm decision never to return home. Savitri is an average type of South Indian housewife who is not capable of taking such a bold step as Gauri in Mulk Raj Anand's novel endeavours. Savitri is capable of sulking in the dark room.

More Complex and Crooked persons.

From 'The English Teacher' onwards we are introduced into the world of more crooked and more complex characters.

Most of them are imported to Malgudian world. There are rougish, cunning and worldly wise people like Sampath, Margayya, Raju, Dr. Pal, Mali and Vasu who refuse to accept anything in a

rising from a very humble position to be a very big banking magnet. Dr. Pal who helps him in accumulating more and more money by hook and by crook becomes the root cause of Margayya's downfall. He plays the role of a villain, spoils Margayya's son, Balu, spreading the astonishing news of his impending bankruptcy like wild fire. The result is that Margayya's clients start knocking at his gate to withdraw their deposited money from his so-called bank and within a twinkling of an eye he is reduced to the state of destitution.

resourceful hero. He begins hislife as a printer publishing srinivas' weekly, 'The Banner'. But very soon he is fed up with printing and publishing and manages to attract huge funds for starting the film industry in Malgudi. It is named as sunrise Pictures. He employs: a number of actors and actresses and technicians for this task, The film is named as 'The Burning of Kama' and the shooting of the film begins at the appointed time. But the infatuation of an artist Ravi for the beautiful heroine, Shanti whom he tries to abduct spoils the whole undertaking and brings complication in the whole affair. The result is that Ravi becomes mad and is subsequently removed to asylum. Sampath, left without any choice, bows out of Malgudi.

Self-Assertive Demon-Incarnate

In the entire world of Narayan's fiction Vasu (H. Vasu) is the only formidable man endowed with extraordinary physical

strength, firm-determination and a sadistic outlook in inflicting pain all around. Natraj, the hero of 'The Man Eater of Malgudi', describes Vasu's huge figure which arouses fear in him and in his happy-go-lucky companions.

Before I could open my mouth, he asked "you Natraj?" I nodded.

He came forward, practically tearing aside the curtain, an act

which violated the sacred traditions of my press . . . He paid no

attention, but stepped forward, extending his hand. - - He gave

me a hard grip. My entire hand disappeared into his fist - he

was a large man, about six feet tall. He looked quite slim, but

his bull-neck and hammer-fist revealed his true stature".

H. Vasu is a taxidermist by profession. In the very first encounter with Vasu Natraj is able to know the demonaic, pugnacious and self-assertive nature of this taxidermist.

<u>Vasu</u> - I knew of his (Guru Pahelwan's) weak spot. I hit him there with the edge of my palm with a chopping movement - - and he fell down and squirmed on the floor - -.

Natraj - You didn't stop to help him ?

vasu - I helped him by leaving him there, instead of holding him upside down and rattling the teeth out of his head". 11

In another encounter when Natraj goes to Vasu to request him to spare the sacred temple-elephant, he behaves in an aggressively nonchalant way:

hundred of you will have to worry before you catch me worried. 12

As against the sentimental outlook of Natraj, Sastri and their

companions scrutinize the breakdown of the joint-family system.

vasu toys with a modern scientific outlook of a taxidermist

(not a zoo-keeper), improving on nature with the help of science.

He is a threat to the old Hindu culture of Malgudi.

Vasu's diet confirms how strong he is :

* I had to eat a hundred almonds every morning and wash them down with half a seer of milk; two hours later six eggs with honey, at lunch chicken and rice, at night vegetables and fruits. Not everyone can hope to have this diet, but I was lucky in finding a man who enjoyed stuffing me like that --- In a few months I would also snap chains, twist iron bars, and pulverise granite.

Whenever Vasu returns to Natraj's attic of the press which he had occupied not as a tenant but a guest, his jeep is loaded with bloody objects. He keeps a wooden chest filled with eyes, round ones, small ones, red ones and black circles. William Walsh rightly observes:

"Vasu is not only the present as opposed to the past,
he is also a darker influence opposed to light and grace. Natraj
and his friends express a style of life and habit of sensibility
sanctioned by the experience of generations — Vasu disrupts
arrangements — He has a nihilistic and menacing air which
becomes in the Indian context a force not negotiable on human
13
terms".

That is why, Vasu takes his place in the Malgudian community as a rakshasa, a demon, the formidable side of life. It is nothing but his death winch brings about freedom and comfort to Malgudi and its simple but self-centred community. The frailest of animals, the mosquito, helps in killing this demonincarnate. It all shows how Narayan is a skilful artist in presenting such a self-assertive man as vasu who dies by his own hammer-fist hand and the termor-striken people of Malgudi once again heave a sigh of relief.

Fake Saints and Real Sanyasis.

Fake saints and real sanyasi have also attracted Narayan to delineate them in his novels. Right from his second novel, 'The Bachelor of Arts ' he has dealt with the problem of renunciation with abiding interest. Chandran, the hero of 'The Bachelor of Arts', goes out of home and becomes a sanyasi for sometime. His conscience disallows him to deceive the innocent village folks who take him to be a real sanyasi. As a result he throws out the ochre- coloured garb and returns home to begin with a new life of a normal and mopeful man. This theme of rununciation is similarly further explored in 'The Dark Room! in which Savitri runs away from home and husband and begins to serve in the village temple as a sweeper. She also returns to her hateful home and sulks in the dark room creating little effect on her erring husband. Narayan introduces the fake sainthood thrust upon Raju in 'The Guide'. The unscrupulous Raju is overtaken by Nemesis and inthe process he finds himself in prison for a small fraud of forgery. After his release from the jail he begins to pose himself as a saint. He soon becomes famous and attracts a crowd of devotees. The critical circumstances force him to undertake fast for a number of days during which he is allowed by his conscience to let his mind roam and touch the depths of morbid and fantastic thought. It is not the compulsive philosophy of Raju which moulds him into a real saint but the constant service of Velan and the seething humanity of Mangal which moves his heart to make the penance a thundering success:

"Why not give the poor devil a chance?

Raju said to himself, instead of hankering after food which one could not get anyway. He felt enraged at the persistence of food thoughts." With a sort of vindictive resolution he told himself, "I will chase away all thoughts of food.

For the next ten days I shall eradicate all thoughts of tongue and stomach from my mind". 14

This resolution gives him a peculiar strength and he is able to develop on these lines:

"If by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do it throughly? For the first time in his life he was making an earnest effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application, outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested. He felt suddenly so enthusiastic that it gave him a new strength to 15 go through with the ordeal".

Raju achieves martyrdom at last when a real saint emerges in his heart to serve the humanity and the universe. It is owing to the transformation of his character; his personality is relatively passive. Desirelessness is the ultimate outcome of Indians, and in this way Raju has realized the Reality, by renouncing everything.

In 'A Tiger For Malgudi' Narayan uniquely combines the elusive and timeless quality of Hindu legend and depicts Raja as the hero of this fable. Surprisingly enough Raja is not a man but a tiger possessed with the soul of an enlightened human being who tells us the story of his life. Raja starts his life as a beast in the Mempi hills, becomes motherless, leaves the den only to find himself being captured and made to perform in a 'Grand Malgudi Circus' and on a film set. Everything here goes against his wishes, and eventually he escapes, only to be recaptured - but this time voluntarily-by the hermit. The two of them leave the town and return to the Mempi hills where they pass their days in sweet philosophical discourse until old age overtakes Raja and he is forced to give up his freedom altogether. It is here that Raja is enlightened. He has assumed a new appearance, other than that of his species, but indicative of some general beatitude.

In the character of Raja, which is symbolical, Narayan yearns xxxx to know "who am I". The "Tiger Hermit" is a real sanyasi whose deeply compulsive philosophy of life has already enabled him to get enlightened. Since he is enlightened, he also employs his powers to save the tiger, the ferocious beast, and transforms him inwardly. He does so

*- On the basis that, deep within, the core of personality is the same inspite of differing appearances and categories, and with the right approach you could expect the same response from a tiger as from any normal human being. 16

The 'Tiger Hermit' is the best creation of Narayan, indicative of his traditional way in matter of characterization. It will not be an exaggeration to state that it is Narayan who knows to transform the common man into the exceptional being. Ofcourse, there are no Hamlets and Othellos in his fiction, no great intellectuals or statesmen among his characters, but he is well-acquainted with the glory of Indian saints and seers. He seems to believe that the self-improvement is the best improvement and here lies his greatness both as the man and creator of unique personalities.

Women characters.

Narayan has already pointed out in his interview with 17 the onlooker that he has 'no heroines' in his fiction. However, among his female characters, he generally relies on portraying two kinds of women as is the case with men. And these two kinds include typical Indian housewife and ultra-modern, fashionable, butter-fly type of women. Among these heroines, savitri, Sushila, Meenakshi (appearing respectively in 'The Dark Room', 'The English Teacher' and 'The Financial Expert') fall in the first category. These women are traditional, docile, modest, gentle, religious and affectionate. They are deeply concerned with the welfare of their husbands and children.

among these women Narayan also presents a variety at times such as Krishnan's mother and Chandran's mother (in 'The English Teacher,' and 'The Bachelor of Arts'). These women though equally loyal to their husband and children, are, however, more dominating and free in their actions. As opposed to these wise and loving housewives, Narayan frequently portrays nagging women like the headmaster's wife in 'The English Teacher,' and the captain's wife in 'A Tiger For Malgudi'. The grandmothers and aunts are also portrayed with a realistic touch as in 'Swami & Friends' 'Waiting For the Mahatama' and 'The Painter of Signs'. Sambu's mother in 'Second Opinion' though standing as a pole apart from her son in the matter of marriage is really Indian mother. This variety of women is rare in Narayan's novels.

There is another variety of women- Shanta Bai (in 'The Dark Room') Shanti (in Mr. Sampath, Rosie (in 'The Guide') and Rangi (in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi) - who belong to the seductive or butterfly-type of women. Shanta Bai belongs to the species of artful and cunning flirts, whose only vocation lies in satisfying their own whims and caprices. She is able to tempt Ramani in her seductive grip. Shanti also does the same and the domestic harmony of Sampath's family is at stake. Being a professional dancer Rangi is crude and seldom feels ashamed of her alluring designs, acts and ways of life. Rosie too is obsessive and doesnot come upto the mark of a domestic women.

There is another type of self-assertive heroines who appear in 'Waiting For the Mahatama' and 'The Painter of Signs,'

Bharati and Daisy are devoted to their missions and at the same time they exhibit no reluctance to boy-friends. Daisy, more particularly, is a strange girl who knows perfectly well how to tackle a simple and feeble-minded Raman and get his whole-hearted co-operation in her mission. Both Sriram and Raman appear to be docide to their lady-love. The post-Independence period has produced such self-assertive women who can show manly-prowess better than men.

Minor Characters.

Apart from these chief characters, there is equally a galaxy of minor characters in Narayan's fiction. They appear to be unimportant and the lower people of Malgudian (South Indian) society. Mari and Ponni in 'The Dark Room', the cart boy and his companions in 'Swami & Friends', Kanni and Gurupad in 'Waiting For the Mahatama', the common people who are Margayya's clients in 'The Financial Expert', Muthu, the petty tea-shopkeeper in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' and Gaffur and Velan are some of the examples of this unimportant section of society.

It is evident that Narayan, to a great extent, is traditionalist in respect of characterization. However, he has a large variety of loveable characters who emerge from the soil of South India and in course of their knowledge and experience develop a sense of belonging to the whole humanity. They are a believable blend of virtues and weaknesses as all human beings are.

Narayan's view of Life As Reflected Through His Characters :

Zarathushtra declares that life "is an eternal struggle between the forces of Good and Evil*. In literature the forces of evil are discomfitted by the forces of Truth, Love and Beauty, symbolizing Good. At times the forces of Evil seem to be gruesome and too formidable to have gone their own way, vanquishing the good. But it is only the appearance, the reality is beyond it, on the other side of the coin. In 'Othello', Desdemona sustains a fatal death, cassio suffers a loss of reputation and physical injuries, even Maria suffers a lot and is killed eventually, but what Tago, the arch-villain, suffers is certainly more than what all suffer on the whole. His whole life at last is a mockery, a perpetual detest, and overbearing to live on. In reality, Iago is in the living hell of this world. It is, therefore, evident that Good is victorious at last, it may appear to be defeated for a while in the beginning or the middle. Francis Bacon who has been called by Alexander Pope 'The Wisest, brightest and meanest of mankind also lays a great deal of emphasis on goodness in man:

"Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth".

It means that man's mind should be controlled first before allowing it to wander into unwanted regions. Narayan's protagonists also try to lead a life free from 'distracting illusions and hysterics', but they are bewildered by unwholesome

irrationalities of life, At times life is really treacherous, unbegrable, detestable and what not. But, on the whole, it is a strange blend of sorrow and happiness. It is not wholly a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing, nor is it a bug-bear to trouble endlessly. On the wholes it is promising and acceptable. It is acceptable because the dynamics of man's experience induce a pietistic feeling in him for life's continuity. For instance, Krishnan's wife, sushila dies in the prime of her youth, abandoning her husband and the only child in 'The English Teacher', but her death proves a boon in disquise as the husband is able to win her soul and realize her perpetual presence at home. Krishnan is no longer agonized now. On the contrary, he has a strange kind of beatitude, as he expresses himself:

*The boundaries of our personalities suddenly dissolved.

It was a moment of rare, immutable joy - a moment for which one 20 feels grateful to Life and Death*.

There is no doubt that such experiences are rate in human life, but in Narayan'sworld of fiction, and more truly in the world of his imagination, they have a vital place. They depend upon the man's endeavour, his personal character, sincerity of purpose, purity of thought and action, patience of mind and the force of love. Narayan points out time and again through his protagonists that the life can be lived without distracting illusions and hysterics unless one demands nothing more than the bare facts of life. It shows passivity of mind,

a strong hold on the workings of human mind, which is a rare characteristic, on the one hand, on the other, it sounds meaning-less in the present day world where the desire is supposed to be the fountainhead for all achievements in human life. Narayan's way of life is rooted in the Hindu culture of eternal India.

In 'The Financial Expert' Margayya's ambitions have no bound, but he returns to his original self only after having experienced shocks and surprises of misfortune. It is the power of love which brings him to the passive existence of life at last. He returns to the bunyan tree with his knobby tin box.

Professor K. + Venkatachari points out :

*It is not resignation that connotes passivity but acceptance that characterizes the attitude which the Narayan hero comes to adopt in the face of experience. Although Narayan hero does not become a 'Sthitaprajana', one who on account of his 'settled spiritual condition' becomes innured to the shocks and surperises of life *21

But Narayan hero has evidently a feeling for the continuity of life. He does not show inclination to reject it altogether. In the recent novel, 'A Tiger For Malgudi' this feeling of life's continuity is expressed in the words of so cunning a creature as the jackal who advises the protagonist Raja to believe in sense of cohesion, because life is not at all to be meant for ending in scuffle:

*If you cannot discover a reason to be enemies, why don't you consider to be friends. How grand can you make it if you joined forces - - if you combined you could make all the jungle shake". 22

Narayan's characters live in their ivory towers so long as they are not tested on the touchstone of life by chance and circumstances which they face in course of their experiences. But Narayan seems to exhort them like Robert Browning not to reject their lives full of ifs and buts and overwhelming irrationalities. They are led to see the "last of life for which the first was made". Life is a journey through serrow and happiness, and this journey can be made worthwhile only by the forces of Truth, Love and Beauty, already present in the human soul.

Continued Indian Atmosphere in His Works And Descriptions:

Narayan's novels and short stories breath an aroma of the typical Indian life. This Indianness is reflected in a content and form so identical as to guarantee the artistry of the whole. The value system and point of view emerge in a different kind of Narrative, plot structure, dialogue and characterization. The middle class people who populate his convas mark his works as Indian from within and outside all the way. Narayan is seldom self-conscious, particularly unimitative in recard to Western attitudes and styles seen in some of his contemporary writers - Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and V.S. Naipaul. He does not insist upon cause-and-effect

psychology, the worldly humanism, affirmation of reality and importance of empirical things. Inspite of his focus of attention to see absurdity in human behaviour, he has a little sense of tragedy, no passion to reform the people and institutions. Narayan seems to consider that the novel is the least satisfactory form for dealing with social ills. And in this way, he differs from Mulk Raj Anand who reflects his passion to improve the society.

Herein lies the clue to Narayan's Indianness. His characters are bewildered by the problems of existence and they get happiness and freedom onlywhen the mundame world appears to them infact ultimately insignificant. For them the real world is the Eternal Static World of Absolute Being, when they have been confirmed fully about the irrationality of the worldly existence of human beings. It is then they come to realize that the man of wisdom, the sage is capable of viewing the turmoil of existence with serenity, detachment and tolerant amused, faintly, pitying curiousity, Narayan tries to fictionalise the permanent and transitional values through the comic and ironic mode of fiction. In this way, his fiction mirrors modern India deep-rooted in ancient traditions and cought up in the crucible of change. The Sarayu river, the Mempi hills, the Mempi forest, the caves and temples are depicted not just to compose the texture of the external landscape; they signify the elements of consciousness and deep-rooted, affirmative Indian vision.

The typical Indian protagonist of Narayan novel begins as a fallen angel having a marked potential or unconquerable

will for the quest of truth. He evolves gradually the necessary vision. That is why, his characters move from experience to innocence. Raju in 'The Guide', Margayka in 'The Financial Expert', Jagan in 'The Vendor of Sweets' move from innocence to wisdom, symbolized by the 'Still Point', the 'Calm of mind', the placidity in attitude with all passions spent.

Narayan does not depict the horrors of the partition days in his novels and in this way his India is free from the problem of communalism. He depicts the struggle for independence under the leadership of Mahatama Gandhi only in 'Waiting for the Mahatama' but his concern is little with the proper movement. The portrayal of Mahatama Gandhi signifies only in the matter of untouchability. In this way, Narayan's India is not very much different from the real India. Since Malgudi is populated by the lower middle class people lost in the problems of their own lives, on the surface it appears to be the partial depiction of India having no place for the down-trodden and the sophisticated people of upper class society. But Narayan is one of the few writers who donot overstep their self-imposed boundaries of creative endeavour. Politics, war, sex, crime, topical problems and the like which a novelist generally exploits to keep pace with the moving wheel of time have little temptation for him. To him war seems to be the negation of life. It has little place in his positive acceptance of life. Incidental descriptions of sex in accordance with the requirement of the themes occur in 'The Guide', 'Waiting For the Mahatama' and 'The Painter of Sings. The 'Man-Eater' Vasu in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' and Kailas in 'The Bachelor of Arts' are shown to have

exaggerated as their actions are limited to their personal whims. Kailas is a drunkard and debauch and Vasu is not a maneater in the real sense of the term as he is referred to by Sastri time and again. He is an embodiment of a perverted modern man who has little sense of Indian morality rooted in the ancient culture of the Ramayana and the Tahabharat.

The world of Narayan's fiction is populous with the examples of buffoons, prostitutes, adulterers, pick-pockets, money-grubbers, drunkards and would-be gangsters, but there is no dearth of virtuous people in it. There is the astrologer who 'said things that pleased and astonished everyone' because his mystical psychology is based on sagacity and shrewd guess work with a matter-of-fact realization that:

"Mankind's troubles' could be analysed in terms of marriage, money and the tangles of human ties". 23

The postman who is acquainted with everyone's business and is

hopes, aspirations and activities. 24

There is the 'Talkative Man' who is an irrepressible storyteller relying on anecdates, a jack of all trades who once brought the municipal statue of Sir Frederick Lawley; Dasi, the bridegroom, who was teased into believing that a Madras film-star was inclining to marry him. There is Mani, the mighty-good-for-nothing, who for ever failed his school

examinations yet secretly pitied his classmates because he believed that he got valuable hints from the school clerk who was not only the 'Omniscient' but also knew all the questions papers of all the classes. Swaminathan's Granny who, when her a grandson disappears, prays to the God of the Thirupathi Hills for his safe return, and on his reappearance prepares to make offcrings to the God "to whom alone she owed the safe return of the child. There is Savitri in 'The Dark Room' who rebels against Ramani's bullying and indifference by running away from home and pre- maturely attempting to enter the third stage of Hindu life. Her cook who always has a perennial excuse for being late for work because 'No two clocks agree'. If she wants him to be punctual, she should buy him a watch. 27 All such happenings are usual in India and in this way the whole atmosphere of Malgudi is charged with the aroma of the typical Indian life.

The departure of the British has brought about greater changes in Malgudi. These changes are symbolized by the new challenges occuring in the placid pools of the town. The old generation continues to act as if nothing has happened, the new generation of their grown-up children is too aware of a world outside India. The validity of horoscopes is interrogated in The Bachelor of Arts. However, the marriage a is permissible within castes. The young quarrel with the old, go away from Malgudi to England, America, eat beef and marry foreigners. They return sometimes to vex and haunt and disturb the uneventful atmospher of the town. The inward glance of Malgudi is related to India which is being disturbed by new changes.

With the rapid growth of the town, industry arrives. The revolt of the generations marks the arrival of the twentieth century. It is no longer the same old Malgudi of pious people whose love had got no bounds. It is crowded by adventurers, film stars, femmes-fatales, pimps and prostitutes. On the one hand, they pollute the atmosphere of the town and corrupt the simple and common Malgudians, on the other hand they evoke pessimism through their activities and affect the natives with a number of problems. But as the spirit of Malgudi protects its citizens, the outsiders are overpowered and reduced to nothing as Vasu is killed mysteriously by his own ego and the deeply-hidden seeds of self-destruction in his overbearing personality. In this way, Narayan seems to emphasize time and again in a series of novels and a number of short-stories that those who are uprooted from their own indigenous culture and are led to revolt against the well-established social order have to face unaccountable trials and tribulations. This happens almost to all outsiders-Rosie in 'The Guide' is left by her husband Marco for treachery she has committed along with Raju, Dr. Pal in 'The Financial Expert' is belaboured by Margayya when he is cought with Balu and undignified women of the town, Grace in 'The Vendor of Sweets! finds herself nowhere whe-n Mali is apprehended by the police for having gone against the rules of excise. Shanti, the butterfly-actress in 'Mr. Sampath' is also led to frustration at last. It is only Shanta Bai in 'The Dark Room' who remains unaffected and unpunished by the spirit of the place. But she is an exception. And exceptions are everywhere.

Archer Rosanne aptly points out how Malgudi brings alive the India of foreigners dreams:

with pictures of Gandhi, selling spices chickpeas, twists of sugar, pockets of cigarettes; streets crowded with children, bullocks, children, dogs and buses; small smoky temples, full of faded marigolds and the sound of drums; the curds, the rice, the little fried cakes; the heroscopes and marriage — — the marvellously practical mysticism. Here are the townsmen, their roots in the village and their sons in Mibert Mission college.

Narayan's India '. . is fascinating and filled with contradictions: ignorance and wisdom; poverty and lavish ritual; and above all the humour of absurdity."

Narayan portrays the contemporary India in 'Waiting

For the Mahatama' which revives the memory of the days of Indian

struggle for freedom. In 'Swami & Friends' the children echo

the vociferous slogans of their elders and ponder over the

problem of slavery under the British. But as the author shows

little sympathy 'for the agitators or what they agitated for',

his interest is kindled by the brave talk of the youngesters,

whom he ought to have seen during his schooldays, collecting in

street corners and echoing the hyperbolic words of their elders.

Even in 'Waiting For the Mahatama' Narayan's focus of attention

is centralized on the love-affair of Sriram and Bharati. However,

the troubled times are protrayed realistically. In 'The Painter

of Signs' the family-planning compaign, that washed off the congress government of its feet in 1977, is projected in order to give a glimpse of India of Late Mrs. Indira Gandhi's period. How film-producers make a fuss over their shots and what happens in the process is shown both in 'Mr. Sampath' and 'A Tiger For Malgudi'.

Apart from his novels, Narayan's short stories also provide a glimpse of India lived by astrologers, pickpockets, hoarders, artists, wayside vendors, labourers, gamblers, flim actors, black-marketeers, beggars, and school teachers. It is certainly in India that we have a pickpocket like Raju (in 'Trail of the Green Blazer') who feels a sense of pity for the motherless child and tries to put the purse back in the pocket of its owner. But he is cought in the very act and handed over to the police. Both 'Astrologer's Day' and 'Lawley Road' are surcharged with Indian atmosphere from beginning to end.

It is, therefore, clear that Indian atmosphere continues both in Narayan's novels and short stories. Human relationships, particularly domestic relationships are treated interestingly and whenever the accepted norms are violated, the normalcy is at stake. The influence of the family is conducive in the restoration of normalcy and the establishment of order. The stress on the role of the family is unmistakably Indian.

popular superstitions, retuals and beliefs in cods, demons and chosts, much that is fantastic and imaginary, provide a glimpse of the rureal India as depicted in 'The Guide' and 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'The Painter of Signs' communication

with the spirit of the dead and fasting to the extent of propitiating the rain-god and the credulous faith of Indians in Sadhus, sanyasis are still prevalent in Indian society, more particularly in South India where people are religious first and anything else thereafter. Such beliefs are unmistakably woven into the fabric of Narayan's novels, which recognizes little logic. Frequent references to Indian myths and legends, the exploitation of such motifs as cobras and dancing girls, as devadasis, the Indian wild life (as in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi') and (A Tiger For Malgudi'), river, lotuses of different coloursare symbolical and continue to dominate the atmosphere of Narayan's hypothetical world of Malgudi. But it is evident that they are depicted, more by way of implicacy than by way of advocacy. Individual feelings, emotions and actions, explorations of hidden human conflicts, human relations within the limits of the family tend to kindle Narayan's imagination vigorously.

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CHAPTER_VII

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ACHIEVEMENTS OF R.K. NARAYAN

Probably no writer since Tagore is better known in the west than R.K. Narayan'. He deserves both priase and appraisal in more distinguishing terms than he seems to have received hitherto; more so because he has never intended to exploit the fashionable modes of fiction_writing based on sex, violence and 'eye_catching topicality'.2 Consistently in thirteen novels he has written during forty-eight years from 'Swami & Friends' in 1935 to 'A Tiger For Malgudi in 1983 - he has confined himself to matters of ordinary everyday life. Yet he has proved interesting, the reason is not far to seek, he offers us so much interest that life itself can offer. Inspite of his limited range of middle class people, 'the spirit of the Indo-Anglian novel 'receives maturity in his fiction'. The earlier novels before him were devoid of impersonal as well as intellectual life. They were primarily designed to be an entertainment for the English serving class of India. But Narayan's emergence on the Indian literary plane brought a new change particularly in the selection of a novel kind of subject_matter and the portrayal of ordinary everyday life lived by the common man in India. Though his contemporaries, particularly Anand and Raja Rao, tried to confine their attention on depicting the problems of independence and ills of Indian Hindu Society (as in 'Untouchable (1935), 'Coolie' (1936) and 'Kanthpura'

(1938) Narayan made an attempt to explore the mood of comedy, crisis in the individual soul and relied on the detached observation as to offer a local, regional but at the same time a universal kind of atmosphere to the world of the fiction - reading public of India and abroad. Professor Stephen Hemenway rightly points out:

"Narayan, perhaps, by recognizing his own limitations as an artist, continues to produce highly readable, happy - go - lucky novels about the same people and place. He advances the genre of the Indo-Anglian novel considerably with his resolution of many linguistic problems, his unique handling of characters, and the Indianization of the East-West theme. His novels are most suitable vehicles for the presentation of ideas and characters capable of amusing westerners. His content and method are quite distinct -- and thus increase the scope and potential of English-language novel of India."

Likewise, Ved Mehta has a high admiration for Narayan as a novelist:

"R.K.Narayan has no equal among Indian novelists writing in English. While his sense of this language is not particularly refined, he nevertheless manages by a miracle of perception and choice of detail to convey the Indian without a single false feeling or gesture. The India R.K.Narayan deals with is of ages and sages.

It breaks the bounds of cultural experience - the contact with the British. It overflows until all her people, in whatever occupation, are engulfed in the novelist's ink. - - - " .

Professor V.V. Kantak finds it difficult to assess Narayan's achievement, because his "very simplicity, his naivete, seems to set a problem." One of Narayan's loveable eccentrics the Headmaster in 'The English Teacher' lays veritable stress on simplicity, "This is the simplicity to which all human conduct must be reduced". To describe this impression we may borrow this expression of the eccentric Headmaster and modify it slightly to read "This is the simplicity to which all art must be reduced". It would certainly constitute the main strength of Narayan's art which stands on its own, having no need at all of any stilts, crutches or props to support it. This is why, Narayan has been able to be left with a 'faithful following, a distinguished reputation' during fifty years of writing fiction. As william Walsh points out:

"--- outside India, that is, where he has received pretty well every mark of that country's national distinction - at least the appreciation of novelists as different from one another as Somerset Maugham and E.M. Forster, each of whom has admired his low-toned, but distinctive individuality, his unaffected literary persona and his professional dedication".

William Walsh is right in his affirmation
because Narayan is professionally a very disciplined writer
rooted in the Indian tradition, the old Hindu tradition
of theGita and the Ramayana, which lays great emphasis on
the maintenance of discrimination. According to this
discrimination, man's will is directed towards one ideal.
Lacking this discrimination, a man is bound to wander
in all directions, after innumerable aims. From the outset Narayan had only one ideal before him, as Professor
Tyengar points out:

some political areas to grind, though these donot offensively intrude into his creative writing. But Narayan has no axes of anykind - - he - - is - - a man of letters pure and simple - - whereas Anand 'finished' his education in Cambridge and London, Narayan had his education entirely in India. He is of India, even of South India. - - "8.

Professor Iyengar's clarification signifies

Narayan's position as a well-determined and disciplined

writer who has Indianized the novel. Really, the novel is

a western art form. But Narayan uses it with a sense of

discrimination. How did he acquire this sense of discri
mination still remains a riddle to his whole - hearted

admirers and bitter critics as well? He is a writer

immersed in his material, having no sideways like his

contemporary writers. His one ideal and whole-hearted

concentration on it enabled him to remain the novelist as novelist. Narayan's world-wide popularity is the result of his simplicity, purity, perseverence, patience and love, the symbols of greatness which ought to bring about glorious success and fame he, continues to enjoy since the publication of his first novel. William Walsh aptly distinguishes him from his fellow novelists and throws a great deal of light on his immense popularity both at home and abroad:

the novelist as metaphysical poet, Narayan is simply the novelist as novelist. R.K.Narayan, now in his seventees, has produced a sizable body of work — which makes him one of the most respected novelists at present writing in the British Commonwealth. Over a period of fifty years of compositions he has built—up a devoted readership throughout the world from New York to Moscow. — — His writing is a distinctive blend of Western technique and Eastern material, and he has succeeded in a remarkable way in making an Indian sensibility at home in Western art."

This distinctive blend of 'Western technique and Eastern material" makes Narayan the Indo-Anglian writer with—out any doubt, whatever may be a dispute about the use of terms - Indo-Anglian and Indo-English. But like Tagore he tries his best to make East and West meet together. Edwin Gerow clarifies this point,

"Narayan is part of a very small group - perhaps alone with Tagore - which has spoken with a literary genuineness that transcends cultural boundaries and which actually says something to post-romantic western man (Sir William Jones, Goethe - - and others seemed to react to the novelty of the recently discovered Indian literature."

Narayan is rather a 'unique figure in modern Indian letters' on account of his unflinchingly traditional outlook. He has gone a step ahead of the great giants of Bengali fiction_Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath Tagore - both of whom were also rooted in Indian tradition, yet they could not escape from adapting the structure of their stories from western romanticism. Bankim's 'Krishnakanta's will' consists of a plot which is partly based on the old motifs of 'error and chance, infatuation' and salvation but the way it steers the characters is harnessed to such fantastic ends as the destruction of the family hastened by murder, adultery, abjuration of duty and some other evidently imported western sins. The book even lacks a happy ending in the approved Indian terms. There is no doubt that the protagonist Gobindlal returns eventually to his wife's death but he is hardly re-united with her. He is inclined, or rather forced by his conscience to spend the rest of his life for the atonement of his sin. This is the real function of his character. Gobindlal appears more like Oedipus than Natraj in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi', who comes to enjoy freedom in the end.

Narayan's whole-hearted devotion to his profession, his consistency of universal vision, his artistic detachment, simplicity of content and form, traditional outlook, his mastery over the presentation of ordinary everyday realities, have enabled him to achieve a great name and fame in the annals of Indo-Anglian fiction. Though Narayan was born in the ordinary family of a school_Headmaster, he has undoubtedly achieved greatness by dint of his dedication to one ideal, and this ideal is to let the individual set out in his fiction on a quest for his identity. This identity of the individual is revealed at last. To make personal as impersonal in art requires a great deal of patience, serenity, broad_mindedness, the extinction of personality or ego and great skill to win the attention of the reader or the audience, and Narayan has all these qualities whereby he enriches his fiction. Catering both to the East and the West, Narayan in his fiction seems to have done a great deal of tight_rope dancing in Malgudi circus for which we cannot escape from complimenting him for his superb performance.

HIS VIEWS ABOUT ART & LITERATURE .

In his writings as well as personal interviews

R.K.Narayan has revealed his views about art and literature.

In his "Gods, Demons and Others" (1965) Narayan has expressed his views about literature, which

in a separate compartment, for the edification only of scholars, but a comprehensive and artistic expression to benefit the literate and the illiterate alike. A true literary composotion should appeal to an infinite variety of ways; any set of stanzas of the Ramayana could be set to music and sung, narrated with dialogue and action and treated as the finest drama, studied analytically for an understanding of the subtleties of language and grammar, or distilled finally to yield esoteric truths. 11

Therefore, literature to Narayan is a variation on the eternal theme of personality and this personality can be studied through diversified ways. His own fiction has several qualities - it can edify the scholars, it is also replete with comprehensive and artistic expression. It would certainly be an exaggeration to compare his novel with the Ramayana, which appeals to an infinite variety of ways, but it is certain that Narayan's work can be analysed in manifold ways. His language is clean. Alan Warner points out that 'Narayan writes admirably clean English'. 12 His style is direct and straightforward, characterized by an economy of expression and vocabulary adequate to deal with the range of subject-matter, and South Indian sensibilities. He seldom uses victorian literary prose, verse rhythms and English public school slangs in his novels. He seems to have been gifted with the English virtue of

understatement with a subtle touch of irony, which the English reader can easily appreciate more than sentimentality and ethical preaching. He establishes rapport with the foreign reader on the pictorial level, offering scenes and situations typical of India: a temple festival (as in 'The Man_Eater of Malgudi'), a doll_display (in 'The Dark Room'), Mempi caves and forests (in 'The Guide'), 'Mr. Sampath' and more comprehensively in 'A Tiger for Malgudi'), classical myths, just to give a glimpse of eternal India. As style is the man himself, Narayan sounds extremely sincere not because he has a tendency to retail authentic information about the people and the landscape of Malgudi, but because he has inhaled the atmosphere of the place to such an extent that he is able to exhale it for the edification and the benefit of his readers.

Narayan points out, again in 'Gods, Demons and Others':

"The characters in the epics are prototypes and moulds in which humanity is cast, and remain valid for all time. Every story has implicit in it a philosophical and moral significance, and an understanding of the distinction between good and evil. To the story teller and the audience the tales are so many chronicles of personalities who inhabited the world at some remote time, and whose lives are worth—understanding, and hence form part of human history rather than fiction".

Narayan moulds these epic characters in his novels. The perpetual fight between the supporters of evil and that of good continues in the world of Narayan's fiction. But there is hardly the Greek tragedy in the end as goodness triumphs at last in almost every novel of Narayan. The meek and the saintly have to suffer temporarily; the triumph of the man of evil is also ephemeral; and everything is bound to come out right at last. The Law of Karma determines a series of births of the mankind. They suffer because of their previous actions, unless they come to realize their evil nature and mould themselves to be good enough to their fellow-beings. In 'The Man Eater of Malgudi' Narayan introduces Vasu, as a strongman of evil, and allows him to continue as a reckless being until he is destroyed by the tempo of his own misdeeds. And these misdeeds have a demonaic design. Natraj and the people of Malgudi are terrorized by this giant. In the epics also,

"Evil has in it, buried subtly, the infallible seeds of its own destruction. And however frightening a demon might seem, his doom is implied in his own evil propensities - a profoundly happy and sustaining philosophy which unfailingly appeals to our people, who never question, "How long, Oh, how long, must we wait to see the downfall of evil?" (P.5).

This profoundly happy and sustaining philosophy is conveyed similarly in "The Man_Eater of Malgudi" through Sastri who is well_versed in Indian Hindu mythology. Sastri consoles Natraj:

"Every rakshasa gets swollen with his ego.

He thinks he is invincible, beyond every law. But sooner or later something or other will destroy him."

Sastri's information is encyclopaedic. His philosophical thought is considerably induced by Vasu. Natraj who appears to be the replica of his own author is confident enough to hope that -

"-- everything would pass and (his) attic would be free." 15

all these mythological references and the subtle understanding of people about their validity signify that Narayan is deep-rooted in the literary values of India's great past. He interprets the contemporary Indian cultural scene in accordance with his acceptance of a range of cultural values. Narayan himself writes in his introduction to the Ramayana's

"In areas of military, political and economic power, we see the Ravana, the evil antagonists of today"

According to Narayan,

"All imaginative writing in India has come from the ancient epics, from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata". 17

Such statements clearly align Narayan with classical literary tradition. In this way, 'Narayan's is classical art'. ¹⁸ This classicism can be seen in the

following principles which occur through Narayan's analysis of his art in 'Gods, Demons and Others', the single major source for his thought about novel form:

- (1) Narayan is likea village story-teller whose daily life is based on the authority of the Vedas, which have in them not only prayer and poetry, but also guidance in minor matters.
- (2) Legends and myths, as contained in the puranas are mere illustrations of the moral and spiritual truths in the Vedas.
- (3) In every story, since goodness triumphs in the end

 (Barring 'The Dark Room' every novel of Narayan signifies this

 fact virtue is rewarded at last), there is no tragedy in the

 Greek sense.
- (4) Over an enormous expanse of time and space events fall into their proper perspective. There is suffering because of the need to work off certain consequences arising from one's actions in a series of births determined by the Law of Karma.

 ('Second Opinion' and 'A Tiger of Malgudi' testify this fact).
- their own, in which the reckoning is in thousands and ten thousands of years, and actions range over several worlds seen and unseen. In his waking (Brahma) creates the universe, which passes through four well-defined epics Then Brahma falls asleep, and there is a total dissolution of everything. (He) wakes up and the business of creation begins all over again.

- (6) For certain purposes this Timeless Being descends to the practical plane in the form of a trinity of gods - Brahma is the creator, Vishnu is the protector, and Shiva is the destroyer; and all of them have important roles in mythological stories, along with a host of minor gods (whom Indra heads) and an even larger host of evil powers broadly termed demons-asuras and rakshasas; added to these are kings and sages of the earth. The pressure exerted by these different types of beings on each other, and their complex relationships at different levels, create the incidents and patterns of our stories.
- spend their lives in the forest, seeking a life of illumination (as Narayan has shown in his recent novel 'A Tiger For Malgudi' the tiger Hermit lives in Mempi Forest of Malgudi) through austerity and concentrated meditation. Demonical creature also undertake intense penance, acquire strange, unlimited powers, and harass mankind and god_kind alike until a redeemer appears and puts them out.
- (8) While the evil-minded Pursue power and riches, idealists renounce everything, including the ego, in their search for an abiding reality. Renunciation is ever a desirable means of attaining a higher life, and at some stage every character adopts it. (Jagan in 'The Vendor of Sweets', Raju in 'The Guide', and Sambu in 'Second Opinion' are living examples).

(9) Though circumstances and details may vary, personality alone remains unchanging and makes sense in any age or any idiom. For Narayan phenomena are but Maya (cosmic illusion), prakriti, glancings, gleamings, refractions-myriad as they happen to be- from an eternal static supreme Being holding infinite, forever unrealized potential. Narayan, like his home and family, is Hindu in attitude, conversation, custom, demeanour and practice. The world is not more important than the shadows of the forest or the white radiance on waves.

Narayan is a storyteller, who takes delight in repeating the work of the gods in idly making and dissolving endless spheres for mere amusement of the process itself. He refers at least once to Supreme Reality of this Universe - Narayana, God of infinite creation.

Most of these general patterns of Gosmic Illusion are plainly discernible in his novels as the cycle of creation—dissolution and rebirth. His protagonists start from innocence to knowledge resulting into experience, the realization of their own self. In the end, they appear to be changed beings, forgetting their past misdeeds and emerging as new beings with maturity and true understanding of life. In this way, Narayan's art is classical.

In his interview with Sunil Sethi of 'India Today'
Narayan clarifies:

"Every writer has his own theory, method of practice of developing his art like every doctor who has a different way of 19 arriving at a diagnosis". According to him, 'it is the academics who tend to generalize, professors who think that literature must be carefully boxed and labelled'. Here Narayan criticizes his critics who tend to judge his work on the principles laid down by old critics of the past. Perhaps the best critic in Narayan's opinion should be the creative writer, and one who is a mere critic is not fully acquainted with the canons of creative writing. R.A. Scott James points out:

"The facts of which the artist is sensible must be facts to which the critic also can penetrate, and these are to be found not only in life in the more obvious sense, but in that whole order facts which furnish the mind - the know-ledge, the memory of the past, the culture the common possession of which makes intelligent conversation possible and exchange of ideas fruitful".

John Updike is the only critic whom Narayan favours with commendation. He has admired Narayan's sense of community and regarded him 'a writer as citizen'. He is himself a renowned novelist of American fiction, endowed with perceptive understanding to 'feel exactly the same way.' Narayan is 'many things to many men', like true reality, but he is very much pleased with Updike:

"I was particularly interested by the point Updike makes about the writer as citizen since I feel exactly the same way. It made me feel good to know that Updike understands my involvement with people - as individuals and as a community" 21

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And here lies a true rapport between the creative writer and the discerning critic.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL HONOURS CONFERRED ON HIM

R.K. Narayan was first recognized as a writer of merit and intelligence by the West. He has pointed out in his memoir (My Days) how he acutely faced the problem of the publication of his first novel. Had there been no Graham Greene to support him in respect of publication, R.K. Narayan would have also slipped into the 'slough of Despond', and his curiosity would have died down. But as it happened, it proved to be a fluke to him. Narayan writes about his first novel, 'Swami & Friends' how it was rejected by several publishers until Graham Greene came to his help:

"When I had completed the novel (Swami & Friends'), I faithfully despatched it to Allen and Unwin, and when it was returned, to another publisher and then another. I had got used to getting back my manuscript with unfailing regularity once every six weeks - two weeks onward journey, two weeks sojourn on a publisher's desk, and two weeks homeward journey with a rejection slip pinned to it. - - The last publisher to return it to me was Dent, and I had advised them in my covering letter to forward the manuscript to Purna ('his neighbouring friend in Mysore') at Exeter College, Oxford.

I sent a parallel letter to Purna advising him to weight the manuscript with a stone and drown it in the Thames".

But Purna never did so. On the contrary, he encouraged Narayan 'not to despair', but wait for sometime. Somehow, by some instinct Purna approached Greene and gave him the manuscript, Narayan tells us:

"Graham Greene recommended my novel to Hamish Hamilton, who accepted it immediately".

The novel was published in 1935. Inspite of its instant appeal, 'it had no sales'. Hamish Hamilton rejected his option for Narayan's second novel, 'The Bachelor of Arts' with the words that 'Swami & Friends' 'was a sad failure'. The first publisher doubted Narayan's literary future. Again "The Bachelor of Arts' was published on Greene's recommendation. 'The Dark Room', once again read and approved by Graham Greene, was published by Macmillan. Narayana had the unique experience of having a new publisher for each book. Thus his novels were first published in the west and only then they were known in India. It was only after 'The Guide' (1958) that Narayan became famous and also earned money which solved his all problems. 'The Guide' won him the National prize of the Indian Literary Academi, the country's highest literary honour. 'The Guide' was accepted for a popular Hindi film, and this film has never failed to draw packed houses. Soon he was included in the 'Writers and their works Series' published by the British Council. But he had already been honoured by well_known novelists like Greene, E.M.Forster and Somerset Maugham, the literary giants of their time.

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As early as in 1938 Somerset Maugham who came to India and stayed in one of Maharaja's mansions in Mysore, was curious to meet Narayan:

Maugham asked :

"How is it that I have not seen anywhere the famous writer living in this city_ Narayan?" Sir Charles (Private Secretary to Maharaja of Mysore) turned to his assistant in consternation and asked, "Find out if there is a famous writer in Mysore. Consult the University Vice-Chancellor, if necessary." 24

Narayan mentions in his autobiography that 'he even did not possess the right dress for visiting a diwan'. In those days he could afford to wear 'a dhoti and a cotton jacket' which were his main outfit. He had resisted the Western style of dressing many years. Though Narayan was reluctant to participate in Somerset Maugham's engagement, he was persuaded by his friend Purna to take advantage of this opportunity. He went to meet Maugham but felt diffident as if he was wrapped in a bath towel.

It was really in 1956 that Narayan was introduced to the U.S.A. (United States of America) by the Michigan State University Press. During 1953 - 1954 this press had published his five novels which were well received by the critics and the readers alike. In 1956 he accepted the invitation from the Rockeffeller Foundation and visited the United States

for the first time. It was not only his first visit to the United States, but really a first trip outside India. He delivered lectures at several universities there, meeting persons from Aldus Huxley to Greta Garbo and staying in Berkeley for three months during which he did most of his writing on 'The Guide'.

The Guide' was published by the Viking Press in 1958. It not only proved a tremendous success but also cought the attention of Dev Anand, the actor-producer and one of the most popular personalities of the filmdom in Nineteen sixties. Though the film proved a box-office hit, it brought little financial gain to the author. Narayan mentions in his autobiography:

"I was told finally that the film of "The Guide" had failed to make any profit. They wrote to me, "we wish to assure you, however, that the moment we make any profit, your share will come to you automatically - - - ". The picture was supposed to have cost them nearly ten million rupees, but much of it was spent on themselves, in fabulous salaries and princely living while producing the film. Now and then they summoned me for vague consultations or to participate in a meet_the_press party, where they proclaimed their grand intentions and achievements after benumbing their guests with free_flowing alcohol".

However, Narayan had an opportunity to dine with Lord Mountbatten at Government House, and to persuade him to request Queen Elizabeth to attend the World Premiere of 'The Guide' in London. He

banquet hall at Government House. It was a fantastic proposal - which perhaps originated in the imagination of late Pearl Buck, who was a partner of Dev Anand in the production of 'The Guide'. After a regal banquet, our hostess, who was the Governor of Bombay, discreetly isolated the film unit from the other guests and piloted them to the presence of His Lordship, seated in a side verandah".

Whatever be the bitter experiences of R.K.Narayan, there is no denying the fact that Dev Anand introduced him to public, and made his name immensely popular in India. Though his fifth novel, 'Mr. Sampath' was also converted into a popular Hindi film in which the well_known actor Motilal played the role of Sampath, it had failed to make Narayan a novelist of the people.

In 1980 Narayan was awarded the A.C. Benson Medal by the Royal Society of Literature and in 1981 the American Akademy and Institute of Arts and Letters made him an Honorary Member.

- - the American Akademy of Arts and Letters elected him to an Honorary membership - - - the second Indian

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so honoured, the first being Sitar maestro, Ravi Shankar _ _ Narayan was in New Delhi to receive the citation from the New U.S. Ambassador, Harry G.Barnes".

At the age of seventy-eight R.K.Narayan is at the zenith of his fame, and there has been hardly any decline in his creative powers. He has already been awarded Padma Bhushan in 1964; he has been conferred D.Litt. by the University of Leeds to be followed a course by the Universities of Delhi & Mysore respectively. He has an honour to have his books translated into several languages - Polish, Hebrew, Russian, French, Italian, Dutch, German and Swedish. Upto 1978 his 'The Guide' had a sale of over one lakh copies. As soon as it was published in Indian edition in 1958, five thousand copies of this novel were sold upto 1962. In 1963 eight thousand copies were republished and since then its demand has been rising again and again. Besides England and America, Narayan's popularity is rising in Russia also. There he has been included in the series of Writers and Scientists of the East' published by Nauku Publishers. Elina Kalinnikova calls him the 'Singer of Malgudi'. Several of his novels and short stories along with sketches have been broadcast by the B.B.C., a rare distinction to be added to Narayan's solid achievements as a living and loveable author. His 'The Guide' is prescribed in several Indian Universities and researches are being done on his work both at home and abroad. It is very often said that a genius is seldom recognized at

home, in Narayan's case it may be true to some extent but his rising popularity belies the common saying. He is at present the greatest fiction writer of Indo_Anglian literature, and one of the most popular author to be read abroad. Khushwant Singh, who very often visits Europe or the United States, points out:

"whenever I am in Europe or the United States,
I spend a considerable time in visiting book stores - - Authors whose work I see most are Narayan, Jhabvala,
Mulgonkar, Markandaya and Bhattacharya in that order".

A STUDY OF THE NOVELIST AS A LIVING AUTHOR.

R.K. Narayan points out in 'My Dateless Diary':

"English studies work on the basis that a dead
author is a good author. He is passive and still while you
explain and analyse him in the classroom; having a living
author on hand may be like having a live lobster on your
plate."

No doubt, it is really a ticklish job to pursue the work of a live_author, at least to a researcher who is ever curious to know all kinds of intimate details about him. It is very often said that Narayan 'hates publicity' and dislikes being interviewed. S.Krishnan, one of Narayan's old friend, clarifies this point:

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"The fact is that while Narayan genuinely enjoys people and derives emotional and artistic sustenance from his contacts, he has an overwhelming reluctance to talk about himself. This reluctance is compounded of many factors — a natural reticence about all aspects of his private life that have no bearing on his public persona, and a truely honest conviction that whatever he has to say he has already put into his books".

That Narayan is shy by nature and a sensitive person can easily be inferred after reading his novels and short stories. The inward glance of the author testifies this fact which can be confirmed more when one gets the opportunity to come into personal contact with him. But what is the main reason of this shyness and sensitivity? Perhaps his early failures 'in his intermediate and degree examinations have something to do with his perpetual tendency to retreat into himself. One of his earliest stories, 'Iswaran' clearly throws a great deal of light on the impression of the failure in examination which hastened a poor student to drown himself in the Sarayu. How he felt about it is described realistically:

"He combed his hair with deliberate care, the more so because he knew everybody looked on him as a sort of an outcast for failing so often. He knew that behind him the whole family and the town were laughing. He felt that they remarked among themselves that washing, combing his hair, and putting on a well-ironed coat, were luxuries too far above his state: He was a failure and had no right to such luxuries". 31

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Breach of Promise' the story of a youth who had sworn to commit suicide, if he failed in his examination, indicates how failures affected Narayan so extravagantly and made him diffident for the rest of his life to come. In his interview with Ved Mehta Narayan disclosed that 'Breach of Promise' "almost his first tale" was "very truthful autobiographical, you know". 32

Tyranny of Fate and irony of prevailing circumstances troubled Narayan time and again until he got rid of 'distracting illusions and hysterics' by dint of meditation after the sudden death of his wife. Though he had already written three earlier novels and a collection of shortstories before the demise of his wife, an admirable author emerged in him after the publication of 'The English Teacher', which is more an autobiography than a novel proper, from 1945 todate Narayan has undergone bitter and sweet experiences of life and has remained a man of fortitude and forbearance. The life of a widower is seldom happy especially in the middle class families where people are always engaged in solving their personal problems more than paying attention to the perpetual crisis going on in the individual soul. Hence living amicably with other members of his family, his mind always remained busy in solving greater problems and making life free from all types of illusions about Fate and the place of man in family, society, and the universe.

NARAYAN : A MAN OF DISCIPLINE

Narayan believes in discipline. That is why, his novels are pieces of perfection, artistic finish, and unfailing artistic detachment. Inspite of any pressure and wayside liabilities, his daily-routine is fixed. Ved Mehta points out:

"He considers his morning walk his office hours, because he stops and talks to people, many of whom chat with him freely about their doings or their troubles - - he observes their ways closely".

Like his protagonists Margayya, Natraj and Raju it is his Nature to get involved in other people's interests and activities. He remains close to his locality and problems of the people living there. This involvement is the best means of providing material for his fiction and reading human nature realistically. That is the reason we find in his fiction the convincing revelation of human nature, without any false gesture and fantastic imagination. Everything appears to be balanced and systematic, ofcourse, with some repetitions which highlight Narayan's sense of continuity in respect of life, this universe and permanent values existing from time immemorial. The portrayal of perpetual struggle between permanent and temporal in his fiction indicates that Narayan manifests greater sparks of wisdom which are of valuable help to the common man to reach his ultimate goal and thus achieve freedom at last.

Narayan's unquestionable immersion in his material signifies his sincerity towards his vocation as an artist. His complete detachment from the world of prevailing illusions is a solid proof of serenity which can balance anyone's mind and enable him to judge the human drama being played on this earth with a perfect sense of balance. In fact, he is endowed with a solid power of Indian Hindu wisdom, that paves the way to realize the reality of this world and the world beyond it. In this way, he belongs to the line of great harbingers of humanity, who speak the language of common people but impart greater messages to divulge the mystery of human existence on this earth. The well_known Hindi poet Gopal Das Neeraj sings in his verse that half of the life of man is spent in being chained deliberately and the other half in getting rid of them. Nothing remains after that - the human soul is seldom free from the tangles of birth - dissolution - and re-birth. But Narayan signifies through his protagonists that chains of human existence can be broken by dint of following righteousness, discipline in all walks of life, and best performance of one's duty. Those who shirk from their own duties and try to run after alluring temptations are bound to be lost in distracting illusions, and hysterics. The best way to avoid such an unwanted confusion is to perform one's own duty whole_heartedly, how_ soever ordinary it may appear to the performer. Narayan is rooted in the philosophy of 'The Bhagavad Gita' that reveals the profundity of the yoga of renunciation :

"Action rightly renounced brings freedom:
Action rightly performed brings freedom:
Both are better
Than mere shunning of action."

(The Bhagavad Gita: Sri Ramakrishna Math: P.123).

When lust and hatred are removed through the power of serenity, man's renunciation does not waver. He is never upset by contradictions in life: neither longing for one thing nor loathing its opposite. The worldly chains which delude his mind are soon cast off. For wise people there is no difference between knowledge and action. And Narayan is unmistakably an illumined soul who has purified his self through the power of meditation.

Now grand oldman, Narayan is a happy person enjoying world-wide popularity and still busy in exploring the mystery of this human life in the universe. It is none else but Narayan whose heart is full of the milk of human kindness which can induce him to perceive the existence of soul even in ferocious animals, not to speak of the human body. The latest fiction purports this fact convincingly and highlights that to solve the problematic secret of this life is certainly a better piece of work than to narrate a simple humorous tale having no problem of this type at all. Living in his Yadavagiri home situated at the outskirts of Mysore and enumerating both losses and gains of his life, Narayan's personality is replete with the Indian axiom - 'Simple living and high thinking".

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Susan E.Croft is right in her statement that "the best word to describe Narayan would be 'simplicity'. - Narayan 'just happened to become a writer, to invent Malgudi, and to gain fame as one of India's best_known novelists. He has proved extremely adept at managing the lot fate gave him."

However, it does not mean that the author is totally worriless and lives altogether in an ivory tower. The travails of writing do parturb him and at times pangs of uncertainty trouble him considerably. Narayan points out about this all:

"It is really a nuisance writing a novel. It ties you down so completely for a year or two. This one ('The Painter of Signs') took a whole year. And you are not quite sure it will be received".

Narayan enjoys good health and still writes fictional books with equal enthusiasm and interest, he has shown for the last fifty years. His novels which have around two hundred odd pages are the essence of the material selected and ordered painstakingly. He is really a hard task master as he points out:

"I just write and revise a great deal - _ I don't have a complete plan, just a broad outline, and the book simply grows".

He has a tendency to write fairly and regularly everyday, mostly after lunch, in a placid atmosphere he has

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created in his Yadavagiri home in Mysore, or in Coimbatore where his only daughter, Hema Narayan lives with her husband and children. His Yadavagiri home is situated at the outskirts of Mysore, surrounded by the countryside and the beautiful view.

Narayan enjoyed very much reading 'Kanthpura' but
Raja Rao's 'The Serpent and the Rope' appeared to him "too
much philosophy and theory'. He likes some of Mulk Raj Anand's
books, because

" _ _ he is full of social awareness and confronts

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social values".

But he is disgusted with the new generation of writers who are not close to their background. He likes regional writings:

"Except we can never get it in translation. But I do agree that potential young novelists get diverted, lose touch with their background, and are not close enough to the people nor disciplined about their writing".

Such is a picture of this born novelist who still occupies a top most place in the annals of Indo-Anglian fiction, and is happily alive to enjoy immense popularity.

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CHAPTER - VIII

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NARAYAN'S COMPARISON WITH SOME CONTEMPORARY WRITERS OF FICTION : RAJA RAO, K. NAGARAJAN & V.S. NAIPAUL

It has already been pointed out in the earlier chapters that Narayan is a pure artist, seldom susceptible to didacticism, philosophy and propaganda. Remaining a pure artist at the core of his heart and observing life as it is known to him, he interprets Indian life aesthetically and with unprejudiced objectivity. However, his Malgudian world gives a glimpse of India, rather South India, and invites comparison with the locales of Raja Rao, K. Nagarajan and V.S. Naipaul. In this way, the study of Narayan's Malgudi, Raja Rao's Kanthpura, K. Nagarajan's Kedaram and V.S. Naipaul's Trinidad is likely to bring about more in common among themselves than with other fictional worlds of English and common. wealth writing. There are presumably two points which may sound irrelevant for a while, and they are that K.Nagarajan is not as prolific and well_known a novelist as R.K.Narayan is, and V.S.Naipaul appears to fall out of the range of Indo. Anglian fiction. But K.Nagarajan's 'Kedaram' and V.S.Naipaul's Trinidad are reflections of India as relevantly as are Narayan's Malgudi and Raja Rao's Kanthpura. Moreover, some of the novels of all these four nevelists evince a similarity in the selection of similar material, undoubtedly with a different treatment. For example, Narayan's 'The Guide' and V.S.Naipaul's &The Mystic Masseur' (1957) evince the curious

similarity "too obvious to have gone unnoticed" The main motif in these two novels is similar - saint-hood thrust upon an undeserving hero. Gamesh and Raju are the undeserving sons of Indian soil. Similarly, R.K.Narayan's 'Waiting for the Mahatama' and K.Nagarajan's 'Chronicles of Kedaram' and 'Athawar House' clearly show the influence of Mahatama Gandhi and the reflection of the nationalist Movement for freedom. Their characters have also a curious similarity as they are an unmistakable blend of the East and the West as all Indians are. Meenakshi Mukherjee aptly justifies this point:

"R.K.Narayan and K. Nagarajan are two examples of writers who have been able to write about life as it is known to them, in their particular areas of the earth - Malgudi and Kedaram - without the need to indulge in any generalizations about what is Indian and what is Western. Their characters are the curious blend of the East and the West which all Indians are, but they refuge to sift the elements. Their (Narayan's and K.Nagarajan's) refusal to take sides, to justify, to explain or to condemn, is responsible for a good deal of their success as novelists".

In addition to this, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao and K. Nagarajan are South Indians and the region and the people that are presented in their novels and short stories are naturally selected from South India. Since all these three novelists hail from South India, they provide the picture of the same region through different names - Malgudi, Kanthpura and Kedaram. Hence their choice and limitations are far

from being arbitrary and unbalanced as they appear to be.

The most important common factor among them all is the projection of India both individually and collectively and that may sound at once as contemporary and timeless.

There is no doubt that creating a sense of place enables the novelist to create a sense of life. Like K. Nagarajan's Kedaram Narayan Malgudi is an unmistakably effective presence in all his thirteen novels to-date, as much as Hard y's Egdon Heath and Ravelce society in 'Silas Marner', or Middlemarch society in 'Middlemarch' or Longbourn society in 'Pride and Prejudice'. The three locales - Malgudi, Kanthpura and Kedaram - donot sound to be as mere settings of effective backgrounds or presence alone but they have other dimensions too. On the one hand they appear to be particular places, on the other they are miniature versions of a larger India inspite of their regional and local dimensions. They appear to be a curious amalgamation of fact and fiction. Naipaul's Trinidad is located on the map of the West Indies while Malgudi, Kanthpura and Kedaram are charged with imagination and reality. But there is no denying the fact that Malgudi, Kanthpura, Kedaram and Trinidad present a particularly diversified vision of India, which sounds at once real and fictional and presents a microcosmic image of the microcosmic world, providing the study of man in relation to his environment and the greater cosmos .

Malqudi and Kedaram have close resemblances with each other as both these towns are supposed to be falling in Tamil districts and they have similar topographical and sociological structures. The difference is that Malgudi appears in all thirteen novels and eighty-four short stories of Narayan while Kedaram figures in Nagarajan's two novels -'Chronicles of Kedaram' and 'Athawar House' and short stories published under the title, "Cold Rice & Other Stories". As Sarayu is the pride of Malgudi, Nilaveni also enriches the world of Kedaram. The resemblance exists in the similar treatment despite the fact that Malgudi is a bigger world than Kedaram. Both these rivers are integral parts of these towns. The Town Hall is also one of the important landmarks of Malgudi, so is of Kedaram. If Malgudians can boast of their Albert Mission, School and college with an English principal, Mr. Browne, Kedaram too can pride of its Board High School with an English Headmaster and a Girls' High School with an English Headmistress. Both Malgudi and Kedaram are enriched with their cricket elevens, the recreation clubs, government officials, teachers, lawyers and several other significant busy bodies of immense values. It appears that K. Nagarajan has obviously derived inspiration from R.K. Narayan for the creation of Kedaram and the similar handling of novelmaterial in his fiction. But there is no harm in deriving inspiration from one's predecessor, at least in the case of a novelist. R.K. Narayan is also indebted to A. Madhaviah and B.Rajam Tyre in respect of a particular kind of ironic humour. Such considerations have nothing to do with the fact of resemblance between Malgudi and Kedaram.

Inspite of several close resemblances at the surface level, Kedaram also, true to the Indian tradition, has its links with a mythic past, symbolized by the Kedareshwar Temple and the river Nilaveni. Nilaveni is considered by the people of Kedaram as the daughter of the Mother Ganges'. Malgudi, too, has a close link with the mythic past in regard to the river Sarayu which was forced into existence by Lord Rama while passing through his way to Lanka and staying there in Nallappa's grove. But Nagarajan has done better in highlighting a sense of place than Narayan in respect of a symbol of unchanging permanence in an ever-changing and ever-growing world of reality. Nagarajan provides the glimpses of the town's mythical past and gives accounts of its more recent military history, and thus sounds better, authentic and adequate. In the consideration of Kedaram the reader is allowed to visualize not only the evolution of the town and its society through the ages but also to look into the Indian society in general from the Vedic period to the present day. Koni, the protagonist in 'Chronicles of Kedaram' reveals that transformation has been too slow and gradual to warrant his tears, shocks and surprises. A good_humoured chuckle recurs in his speaking in regard to the changed times, with the inclusion of widowmarriage, untouchability and other seemingly broken conventions of the middle class society of Brahmins particularly. Koni admits that these changes have occured because of the need for amelioration, and therefore, Nirmala Chari's step to reject her husband and develop relations with Vasu

coupled with subsequent romantic adventure are typical in view of emergence of the new middle class. Koni represents rather the uneducated people of middleclass who are uncertain in their attitudes and instances. In his narration he draws the picture of the earlier decades of the 20th century in which Mahatama Gandhi was regarded by the average Indian as the champion of liberty. The nationalist's Movement for freedom and the regeneration of society are also mentioned interestingly. Inspite of the favour shown by the intellicentsia and the cultural elite for all such changing patterns of life and values as widow-marriage, untouchability and the rejection of social conventions, the leadership of Gandhi was still doubtful. It is, therefore, obvious that like Malgudian society the people of Kedaram also display their respect for Mahatama Gandhi as a leader of the Nationalist_Movement for freedom but they have little inclination to accept all social, political and religious changes. They appreciate the Mahatama as a cardinal fighter devoted honestly to the political emancipation of the country. That is why, both R.K. Narayan and K. Nagarajan present Gandhi in their novels more ironical than reverential. It is certainly a different picture of Mahatama Gandhi which we find in Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura' where the whole village is stirred by the impact of the Mahatama and the fervour aroused by him for the nationalist_Movement for freedom. The unscrupulous opportunists and blackguards like Vanchinath Sastri are easily able to impress Mahatama Gandhi and become his trusted lieutenants. It clearlyshows how cynicism and hypocrisy had become the common factor in the attitude of the Englisheducated middle class towards the father of the nation.

Considered in the light of this point of view,

Kedaram also presents a true image of India like Malgudi and

Kanthpura. The difference between the rural and the urban is

on the surface; but the deeper difference lies between two

levels of maturity, sophistication and culture. Despite

these seemingly divergent versions, Kedaram and Kanthpura and

Narayan's Malgudi are the symbols of truer and greater India

which has deep roots in timelessness and endurance. It is the

India of timeless nature, of wonderful landscape whose beauty

and majesty have survived the overwhelming onslaughts of time:

"--- the Nilaveni meandered among the rich fields whose rich-red earth showed among the circumambient blue. It has a vision of beauty; and it enslaved you and you gazed, drinking it all in. One felt uplifted by the sun and the colour and the life and movement with which all nature seemed suddenly endowed. One can understand the ecstasy of the ancients at the sight of the sun rising and setting; it gave the Sandhayavandanam a rich significance; it was an outpouring of man's ingratitude from the blessings which came from the sun, the giver of all life, a dithyramb of praise to the all-pervasive oversoul which gave the sun its power".

In this passage K. Nagarajan has insinuated the very roots of Indian life and culture. The ultimate source of spiritual emancipation, the inner stability and strength to mystic communion, and the unbreakable rapport with the cosmos are implicitly reflected in the above passage. Our ancient_native culture also teaches us to establish the sir

rapport with the cosmos, because the abiding beauty of nature is able to draw the attention of the being in a magical way. These sources provide a look into the perennial beauty which is composed of spiritual strength and is able to charm the Indians to return to it when they find themselves too much in the world and have little time to stand and stare. The old parents of Koni and his wife symbolize the old Hindu order that can still prove instrumental in the preservation of this ancient culture of the vedas and the Ramayana. The temple of Kedareshwar and Forty-five Sannidhi Street stand for the two bowers of peace where the disillusioned and benighted can find ultimate retreat for protection and comfort. Professor M.G.

Krishnamurti's observation is quite appropriate in accordance with this argument:

"The temple like his parents, symbolizes for Koni some eternal verities which give meaning to his life and which help him accept his experiences".

But the same sun in V.S.Naipaul's novel, 'A House For Mr. Biswas' hurts Mr. Biswas's eyes and makes all others sweat because of unbearable heat:

"The sun came through the open windows on the ground floor and struck the kitchen wall. Woodwork and frosted glass were hot to the touch. The inside of the brick wall was warm. The sun went through the house and laid dizzling stripes on the exposed staircase. Only the kitchen escaped the sun; everywhere else, despite the lattice work and open windows,

was airlessness, a concentration of heat and light which hurt their eyes and made them sweat".

Though situations are different in K.Nagarajan's 'Chronicles of Kedaram' and V.S.Naipaul's 'A House For Mr. Biswas', the sun is the same. To the former the sun is 'the giver of all life while to the latter a source of sweat and fatigue. Koni and Biswas stand in contrast to each other.

In Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura' the central point is the place and this 'sthalapurana' turns eventually into a Gandhipurana. The small village Kanthpura nestles among the blue mountains up in the western Ghats, and like Hardy's Egdon Heath it has stood isolated, remained cut off from the rest of the world outside, and kept far far away from the ignoble strife of the maddening crowd. Nevertheless, it is not devoid of stability in its own social structure, a timeless culture representing unchanging patterns of life which the life-giving waters of Himavathi have survived along with the bountiful goddess Kanchamma. The people of Kanthpura are rooted in the ancient Indian culture and have abiding faith in the protective power of the goddess who has saved them time and again from many a calemity. On the one hand, Kanthpura has been steeped in obscurity and ignorance and has accepted its abstruse Fate placidly, on the other hand it has also maintained the old legacy of religion and spirituality with the help of rituals, worships, Harikathas and celebration of festivals along with the lighting of Kartic lamps. It is on account of these symbolic acts and beliefs that the people

Avatars or incarnations and felt the presence of their Eternal Light. They have unshakable faith in the existence of incarnations like common people of India and believe that the presence of the 'Eternal Light' would not only protect them from calamities but also save the world at large from darker powers. The emergence of Mahatama Gandhi, as the protagonist Moorthy justifies and lets the people of Kanthpura see, cannot be a political event on the Indian scene but a religious experience in conformity with the Hindu incarnations. This serves as a key to one's understanding of India. Sri Aurobindo points out in his 'The Renaissance in India' that every movement in India, whether political or social, begins only as religious or spiritual movement. C.D. Narasimbaiah has also argued out in a similar way:

" - - religion becomes the nucleus of social regeneration in Kanthpura in the true tradition of India where social reformers have been profoundly religious men". 7

Therefore, it is obvious that Raja Rao's Kanthpura presents the image of eternal India as Narayan's Malgudi and K. Nagarajan's Kedaram do, the differencelies in the diversified approaches of these novelists. C.D.Narasimhaiah's observation is apt enough in this regard:

" _ _ Kanthpura is a India in microcosm; what happened there is what happened everywhere in India during those
terrible years of our fight for freedom".

Kanthpura stands for India in microcosm in another It is a typical village of India when we consider it from the viewpoint of physiographical, civic and socioeconomic structures. Raja Rao has woven the fabric of social relationship and living so strongly that the perpetuating ills of society such as strong sense of casteism and untouchability are the part and parcel of this fabric. The deeprooted poverty in the village life has given rise to usurpers like Linga Chetti, Rama Chetti who grow prosperous and exploit the poor people for their selfish motives. The life up in the Ghats and Skeffington Coffee Estate abounds in the evil of exploitation brought about by the despotic attitude of the European planters and the assistance provided by panderers like Bade Khan. It presents the picture of India under the terrible rule of the Britishers, a hot-bed of tyranny on the one hand and unwanted servility on the other. Moorthy serves as a symbol of small Gandhies of the innumerable villages, who were bent upon to uproot the evils of society and side by side stood for animating the masses to revolt against the repressible rule of the Britishers. Thus, 'Kanthpura' stands for the miniature version of India, the resurgent Bharat, marching forward to make a pilgrim's progress to freedom and bearing on her shoulders the burden of poverty, hunger and exploitation. Above all, it symbolizes the poignant vision of human predicament, corresponding to that of piers the plowman and rising above the regional tone than what it seems to be on the surface.

The developments of Narayan's Malgudi are slow.

It doesnot rise to the level of swiftness and completeness of Kanthpura and Kedaram. Narayan does not intend to indulge in the lengthy details of the place and its history. He is seldom in a hurry to do so. From 'Swami & Friends' (1935) to 'A Tiger For Malgudi' (1983) Narayan lets us watch from one novel to another the slow but steady growth of Malgudi. As Nirmal Mukerji observes:

"It is through little offhand details thrown in here and there that he creates the illusion of the reality of his setting".

Malgudi provides a sociological verisimilitude and a vivid physical impression of South India. The most important point is Narayan's responses to his Mysore surroundings which serve as an essential part of his imaginative life, without displaying little consciousness of his contriving or calculating such an effect.

"Malgudi is quiet, dusty and uneventful, lacking political and social problems, sexual outrage, and hundreds of other things, among them the fast moving hands of the clock — The dominant force in Malgudi is ineluctable fate playing one ironic trick after another on the simple inhabitants who rise and fall a little blandly as forture dictates. But the bland cosmos of Malgudi is blessed with grace, because its people are innocent and comic — copies of Narayan, with his dazzling 10 smile fixed on their faces".

There is no denying the fact that Malgudi of earlier novels is 'quiet, uneventful and having no social problems such as communalism, sexual outrage and the like, but its people are not as entirely innocent as Ved Mehta has pointed out. For instance, Ramani, Vasu, Balu, Dr. Pal, Margayya, Raju, Shanta Bai, Sampath, Shanti, Daisy — all are composed of busy burdened minds which will never let them rest. But as Narayan has a balanced attitude towards life, he creates on the other hand, an atmosphere of placidity, spiritual order, and a qualified assurance of man's essential goodness, complementing the perturbations, chaos and human failings which are very much part of day_to_day life of the town. This point of view, for instance can be acknowledged in the observation of Srinivas (in 'Mr. Sampath') who has a deep_rooted belief that life and human relationships obey a law of cosmic balance;

" - things being neither particularly wrong nor right, but just balancing themselves. Just the required Number of wrongdoers as there are people who deserved wrong deeds, just as many policemen to bring them to their senses, if possible, and just as many wrongdoers again to keep the police employed, and so on and on in an infinite concentric circle."

On the other side of the picture, Malgudi grows in importance with the introduction of the railway, Albert Mission High School which develops into Albert Mission College, and the appearance of the Taj Hotel with its roof gardens, fashionable shops, and hair_cutting saloons, photo_studioes, Boardless Coffee House, Sunrise Pictures, circus and zoo and

so on. The emergence of new currents and cross-currents disturbs the serenity of this town - life insomuch that trouble and disaster become the common occurances here. The intrusions of outsiders bring about confusion and chaos in the placid atmosphere of Malgudi. We also watch the impact of Gandhian Movement, Family planning Drive, moving the people of the town and disturbing its equanimity. Therefore, the whole history of the town is given through a series of novels. Though Narayan avoids philosophical abstractions except they are relevant and required to a given character's attitude towards life, Malgudi being characteristically Indian serves as a metaphysical idea as well as a geographical reality. Physical setting is permeated by legend and history. Narayan has

"I can't write a novel without Krishna, Ganesa,
Hanuman, astrologers, temples, devadasis, or temple prostitutes
- that has turned out to be my India".

The existence of Thirupathi and Mempi hills and the river Sarayu indicates Malgudi's spiritually meaningful equivalents of the Himalays and the Ganges. The local deity presides over the Thirupathi Hills while the Sarayu is the ancient river that was created by Lord Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, when he scratched a line in the sand with an arrow. While the older generation of the town considers the river sacred, the younger generation finds the river as a means for relaxation, conversation and romance. The town also bears the signs of the impact of more recent history, as Nirmal Mukerji comments:

"With the ancient river Sarayu -- on one end, and the Westernized Lawley Extension area on the other, Malgudi seems to be a curious mixture of the traditionalist East and the ever-changing West. Like the rest of India it is in a state of slow transition. It is changing, no doubt, but unwillingly. It can neither reject nor accept the modern ideas."

The vision of Malgudi as a miniature India is more or less complete after the consecutive analysis of his novels and representative short stories. The vision is total not only historically, socially and culturally but also from the viewpoint of providing several valuable insights into the average Indian character, such as Indian attitude towards political and spiritual leadership, love, marriage, home, human relationships and values, fashions and foreigners, life and death and life beyond it, and the more engaging questions of sin, redemption and regeneration. Therefore, the vision of India as it appears after the integrated study of Narayan's novels and short stories is a profoundly philosophical vision. It is mainly because every novel of Narayan ends in a clear-cut message of return, reunion, restoration of normalcy, order and harmony, serenity and peace. It is philosophical in the sense that Narayan brings out clearly that lost moral and spiritual values, when restored, are bound to result into redemption and regeneration of mankind. In this way, Malgudi is the symbol of India not only as a geographical reality alone but also a social, cultural and spiritual entity.

In comparison to Malgudi, Kanthpura and Kedaram, V.S. Naipaul's Trinidad does not appear to be a mythical region. Trinidad can be located on the map of the west Indies and hence it is not like the fictitious creation of Malgudi, Kanthpura and Kedaram. However, it draws the picture of India as it is still lived in the West Indies, represented by the Indian people having migrated there during the British era. We are little concerned with what Trinidad is in reality, our main concern lies in the fact how Naipaul has presented it as the valuable part of India in his novels - 'The Mystic Masseur', 'A House For Mr. Biswas' and 'Miguel Street'. The Indian society living in Trinidad is a colonial society which is, on the one hand, part of Trinidad society and on the other hand it has roots in Hindu culture. This Hindu society still living in Trinidad is engaged in a struggle to preserve its Indian identity. People have retained their Indian names and they still observe Hindu rituals, festivals, cling to several old superstitions, irrational beliefs - such as magic and miracles, ghosts and spirits. Naipaul, being a product of Hindu Brahminical culture, tries to show how the colonial Hindu society is immensely conscious of superiority of the Brahmin and has preserved not only a social and caste structure in accordance with unmistakably Indian tradition, but also several age-old institutions of joint_family & conventionally arranged marriage based on the system of dowry. In this society expensive feasts have got their own importance particularly on occasions of child_birth, marriage and funerals. Inspite of all such customs and beliefs, these people seem to have equally preserved the

Indian poverty and some mistaken notions of status, honour and prestige. There is no doubt that they are well-versed in Hindi language, but the recurring impression that the reader gets after the integrated study of Naipaul's 'The Mystic Masseur and 'A House For Mr. Biswas' is that their medium of communication is English. But this English as spoken by Naipaul's Indian characters has a special brand of their own; it is queer, funny, having nothing in common with Indian English as it is spoken particularly by the characters in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, K. Nagarajan and Raja Rao. Therefore, Indian society living in Trinidad speak a different type of English, having little Indian flavour and brand. Their English is funny and bad as such sentences _ 'I glad you learning gratitude', 'I not going to tell you', 'what you go and do now'? - clearly indicate : There are some characters slike Mrs. Tulsi in 'A House For Mr. Biswas who are accustomed to speak good English:

"Our family is unlucky that way. Think of the worry

I had when your father died' -- And when you marry your girl

children you can't say what sort of life you are letting them

in for. They have to live their fate. Mothers-in-law, sisters
in-law. Idle husbands, wife-beaters".

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Inspite of Indian feelings and sentiments expressed here, the language has nothing Indian about it except an odd coinage like 'wife_beaters', nevertheless, the Indian section of society living in Trinidad is primarily Indian. The

fictional world of 'The Mystic Masseur' is India in miniature and so is of 'A House For Mr. Biswas', though they represent a different vision of India which appears not only superficial and full of contrivance, but also incomprehensive and far from being profound. Naipaul's fictional world presents India which is transplanted on the one hand and on the other hand it is still engaged in finding its roots. The preservation of cultural identity by means of a conscious revival of 'rituals and unifying symbols' indicates that the Indian society of Trinidad is not only ineffective but wanting in spirit which we find in abundance in the Hindu societies presented in the novels and short stories of Narayan, Rao and Nagarajan. In 'The Mystic Masseur' Ganesh tries to construct a miniature India in fuente Grove and the people living herein are extremely impelled by an anxiety to preserve their identity in view of their old culture. Gamesh's India appears to them as a substitute for real thing. But even this sort of India is taken from them by Ganesh himself who on the failure of Indian rituals here is driven to transfer these rituals to England and becomes G.Ramsay Muir, the colonial statesman. In this way, 'The Mystic Masseur' is an allegory, presenting the history of the Hindu community in India. The bitter experience of Ganesh in 'The Mystic Masseur' seems to be the common experience of the entire Hindu community living in Trinidad. The novel, most probably, tells the story of its author, Naipaul, who is driven to his own struggle and engaged in finding his roots and discovering his identity. Thus,

Naipaul's India appears to be a metaphor of identity which he found 'an area of darkness on reiterated visits to this ancestral land. On the contrary, the fictional characters of Naipaul - Ganesh and Mr. Biswas more particularly - have no expectations to visit their ancestral land and hence they accept Fuente: Grove or Hanuman House as their real India.

The difference between Naipaul and Narayan in relation to Indian Hindu culture lies in the fact that the former is unbeliever while the latter has firm belief in ancient culture of Hindus. In 'An Area of Darkness' Naipaul gives us the background of his childhood:

"I came of a family that abounded with pundits. But I had been born an unbeliever. I took no pleasure in religious ceremonies. They were too long and the food came at the end. I did not understand the language — it was as if our elders expected that our understanding would be instinctive — and no one explained the prayers or the ritual. One ceremony was like another. The images did not interest me; I never sought to learn their significance. So it happened that, though growing up in an orthodox family, I remained almost totally ignorant of Hinduism".

Sudha Rai points out that "Naipaul is an Indian Brahmin twice removed from the land of his origin by virtue of his grandfather having migrated to Trinidad as an indentured labourer; he is a west Indian by birth and upbringing in Trinidad (though the crucial childhood years were marked

by a Brahmin way of life); lastly Naipaul is an expatriate in London, because of self_chosen exile, both from the country of his ancestors and the country of his birth" 16

This fact clearly justifies that Naipaul's India cannot be the real India which we find in K.Nagarajan's 'Forty-five Sannidhi Street' in Kedaram, or in an age-old rural world of Kanthpura, or in the world of Malgudi where scholars and scamps jostle with each other and people are conscious of their ancient Hindu culture. R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and K. Nagarajan know and discover a greater India than Naipaul can. Raja Rao, even more particularly, seeks to discover a greater India inspite of the fact that he too is an outsider and expatriate. But men like V.S. Naipaul fail to discover the real India because of their negative sense of understanding about the reality of this country. Hence R.K. Narayan is not only a real delineator of India as it is known to him but also a true novelist who seldom believes in distorting the reality. However, Raja Rao, K. Nagarajan and V.S.Naipaul have done well in projecting the image of India very much in common with the fictional worlds of other Indo-Anglian writers. Since Naipaul is an expatriate and more critical than R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and K. Nagarajan, he presents a concept of India more in common with the Britishers than Indo-Anglian writers. A passage from his 'The Overcrowded Barracoon justifies this point clearly :

"Yet there remains a concept of India - as what? Something more than the urban middleclass, the politicians,

particularly when he draws his material from his own locality. He approves of India's Swamis, sadhus, holymen and miraclemen despite their charlatanism, insincerity, hypocrisy and fraudulence. He knows very well that howsoever indifferent, insincere, hypocritical and fraudulent a man may be, he is bound to improve at last. That is why, every novel of Narayan is at last a message of harmony, acceptance of life, normalcy and the restoration of peace. He does not lay emphasis on the improvement of society as a whole but brings out that the improvement of the individual is bound to ameliorate the society of which he is an unbreakable part. Throughout his writing career, spanning nearly fifty years, Narayan has remained uncommitted, unattached, objective and with an ideological neutrality. His art of fiction thus lays greater emphasis on reformatory than the revolutionary outlook. But he is firmly committed to the aesthetics of comedy and the ideological acceptance of irrational life as it is in this world. But his undeniable commitment to the ideological acceptance of life is based on the integration of norms, both Indian and Western, in want of which no individual can be able to sail successfully through the ocean of life in this universe. Narayan measures that the Hindu norms of Dharma, Karma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, if integrated with the Western norms of individuality, liberty and fraternity, are bound to bring about the restoration of normalcy, order and peace in individuals. But it can only be possible when the individual remains firmly rooted in his own culture and accepts side by side some ennobling features of Western culture as well. He lays

emphasis on the philosophy of detachment and renunciation because the predicament of the individual mind can only be washed off by the wisdom of the past. That is why despite the local trappings, his novels abound with implicit message of universal validity - to accept life as it is and live in this world freely and happily.

Narayan's continual exploration in regard to the relation between India's classical past and her contemporary society remains a dominant aspect of his form of fiction. He is a perceptive interpreter of the contemporary Indian society which has repeatedly faced the onslaughts of Western culture making deep inroads in the life of the common man. He does not step beyond a set of moral and cultural values which have remained India's legacy from time immemorial. In this way, he is traditional, seldom affected by western modes and ideas in fiction. That is why, his novels can be read by all and sundry, having no distinction of age and outlook. They provide a flash of hope to those who are bewildered by the pangs of sorrow in their lives and direct them to live without anxiety. But there is a restriction regarding the balance of mind without which the predicament of life cannot be eliminated. Narayan is basically a yogi and he emphasizes time and again that the misery that we suffer springs from ignorance, from non-discrimination between the real and the unreal. It has become a tendency among human beings at length to take the bad for the good, the dream for the reality, and thus remain perpetually confounded to seek their way into the vast sea of life in this universe. As implicit in his latest fiction,

he emphasizes that soul is the only reality and we have forgotten it due to the worldly temptations which automatically become meaningless when the sparks of wisdom enlighten our beings. As Narayan points out time and again in his novels and short stories that human body is an unreal dream and we are sorrowful and miserable because we think we are all bodies. Hence this non-discrimination is the cause of all human misery. It is undeniably caused by ignorance. When ignorance is eradicated by equilibrium, it brings strength and happiness to accept all sorts of irrationalities which the ironic life is bound to shower on human fate. In 'The English Teacher' Narayan presents the protagonist Krishnan who experiences the ecstasy of soul and thus comes to understand the deeper meaning of life and solve the mystery of death. Raju in 'The Guide' also experiences at last the vitality of his inner being and enjoys redemption, only after going through a series of developments which are required for a Yogi when Raju comes to realize that the soul depends on nothing in the universe, from gods to the lowest atom, he is hastened to isolation and perfection. Now he is not at all bewildered by the pangs of sorrow. He attains this state when the mixture of purity and impurity called Sattva (intellect) has been made as pure as soul. Similarly, the tiger who is illumined by a real hermit also passes through a series of developments and comes to realize at last that within the forbidden exterior of this body lies the greatest being. In this way, 'A Tiger For Malgudi divulges a greater mystery of this human life and

provides a deeper meaning which would have persistently concerned the novelist after the publication of 'The Dark Room' in which he brought out how helplessness resulted into the realization of the self. The protagonist Savitri attains spiritual freedom by means of sacrificing herself on the altar of parental duty and thereby remaining subsequently unmoved by the pangs of sorrow. So long as she is attached to her traditional pride of wifehood at home, she is driven to distracting illusions and she considers her life to be a burden on this earth. The moment she comes to realize that happiness lies in doing her own duty well without being driven to impressions which her pitiable condition at home has brought forth, she attains individual freedom. Therefore, Narayan's characters who are common human beings of middle class society reach perfection at last through the illumination of their inner being and here lies Narayan's greatness as a novelist choosing the ordinary material and making it a piece of perfection. That is why, William Walsh favours him with a sympathetic evaluation :

v.Panduranga Rao also confers well_deserved praise
on Narayan as a writer of greater commitment.

*Narayan is a writer with full commitment to . .

spiritual values and ideas, with which Indians are normally familiar. Narayan's vision is essentially moral, for the problems he sets himself to resolve in his novels are largely ethical. This is not to underplay the comic irony of an

artist much admired in the West: On the contrary, it is his comic vitality that humanizes Narayan's grand vision. The elusive charm of his success is the direct result of a rare combination of comic sense and religious sensibility.

Rao's views are fully agreeable because the deceptive simplicity of Narayan's fiction has a latent meaning within and this can only be found out by constant exploration carried out to recognise a rare combination of comic sense and religious sensibility. He is a rare genius, inimitable, sincere, modest, diffident, curious and disciplined. That's why, inspite of his regional art as a novelist, he is able to win the attention of a larger reading public outside India, remaining at the core of his heart primarily an Indian.

The purpose of this research has been obviously achieved with a noticeable tendency that Narayan applies a regional approach to his art of fiction because he aims at delineating the life of South Indian middle class people with whom he is personally acquainted and whose psychology is not alien to him. This marks his honesty, sincerity and true approach to deal with the reality. It is through the provincial and localized life of Malgudi that R.K. Narayan achieves a universal vision.

On the one hand Narayan is not a committed writer because he is detached from the definite ideology of Mulk Raj Anand to improve the society, on the other hand he is committed to some moral principles of character and conduct. V.S.Naipaul's remark that 'the India of Narayan's novels is not the India

that the visitor sees. He tells an Indian truth is in accordance with what the visitor can be able to have a glimpse of surface reality. Narayan, in Naipaul's view tells the truth of 'Indian confusion', 'personal bewilderment' of 'the dead horses and immobile chariot of the Kurukshetra temple where 'Shiva has ceased to dance' may be partially true with respect of changes brought about by industrialization, political set_up and semi_westernization of Indian society, but the reality is that through his novels Narayan depicts how the individual is overwhelmed by the pressure of such changes and the only way to save him from this unwanted pressure is to keep a subtle balance in life : harmony of such incompatible conditions as involvement and detachment, delusion and understanding, materialism and spirituality, vices and virtues, reason and emotion. Thus his art of novel is not 'purposeless' but full of purpose, and it is in line with the Indian tradition.

CONCLUSION

Narayan occupies the highest place in the annals of Indo-Anglian fiction today and his novels and short stories are being tested on the touchstone of universality by a number-less scholars engaged in research work on his fiction. R.K.

Narayan once remarked that like a true reality he has become "many things to many people". This indicates his happiness for being a versatile genius and impressing the world of readers by means of abiding interest which permeates his fiction. He is the most fortunate fiction writer having been highly respected in his life-time and explored by the world of professors and

academicians. Though he is hardly convinced with the judgments which are given on his art of fiction by several scholars of the country and of abroad, he is a happy man all the same. His memoir reveals the secret of his perennial interest in writing from the outset. It also throws a great deal of light on his childhood being spent under the protection of his grandmother who was not only a great storyteller but also a great teacher. It is here that he began to take interest in the company of pets - a monkey, a peacock, succeeded by a kitten with a bushy tail, a mynah, a green parrot and a little hairy puppy bought for one rupee from a butler who served in a European house. His uncle was a zealous photographer, one of the earliest as this art was not common at the very dawn of the 20th century which produced this great novelist. Narayan was very often taken together with his friend, the monkey, whom people called Rama, and the boy clearly discerned with delight a marked facial resemblance between himself and the monkey in his uncle's photographs. He had a clear hope that others would also do the same and detect the likeness too. His great granny was horrified at the idea and had taken the gloomy view that being photographed was to shorten the subject's life. This all indicates how Narayan was a born visionary having so much interest for the world of imagination. This world of imagination was broken asunder by the school and college life which not only distracted him with unwarranted illusions but also disgruntled him to turn his eyes to the inner illumination of his own being. The result was that his fondness of writing grew day by day and a sort of reluctance towards academic education remained a life_long whimper in him.

That is why, we find rootless intellectuals in his novels.

Himself a product of the British-imposed education, he shows an understanding of the problems of these rootless intellectuals. Chandran is 'The Bachelor of Arts', Krishnan in 'The English Teacher', Srinivas in 'The Printer of Malgudi', Dr. Pal in 'The Financial Expert', Marco in 'The Guide' and Vasu in 'The Man_Eater of Malgudi' - all face innumerable problems of employment and are not able to adjust happily in Indian social order. Narayan himself was not able to settle in any profession after he secured a degree of the Bachelor of Arts from Maharaja College, Mysore, But such difficulties paved the way for his writing career.

Indo_Anglian fiction before the emergence of Anand,
Raja Rao and Narayan was in a tentative state; it was struggling
like a toddling child. Narayan appeared on the Indo_Anglian
scene with a firm determination to write social comic novels.
He was clear that the Indian sensibility was different to a
large extent from that of the west. He found that 'The pure
delight of watching a novel grow can never be duplicated by
any other experience'. Later when he was writing 'The Guide'
in the United States, lodging for three months at a modest
hotel in Berkeley, paying seventy_five dollars per_month he
was supplied with a single bed_room and study, and daily room
services and a hot plate for cooking his food. He describes
his regimen:

"Nothing much to record, the same routine. I have got into the routine of writing - about one thousand five hundred to two thousand words a day anyhow. I have the whole picture ready in my mind, except for some detail here and there and the only question is to put in writing. Some days when I feel I have been wasting time I save my conscience by telling Kaplan at the desk, "I am going to be very busy for the next few weeks trying to get on with my book. A restatement of purpose is very helpful under these circumstances. Graham Greene liked the story when I narrated to him in London. . This becomes a major obsession with me. I think of elaborate calculations, a thousand words a day and by February I should complete the first draft. In order tofacilitate my work I take a typewriter on hire; after three days of tapping away it gets on my nerves, and I lounge on the sofa and write by hand with my pen. Whatever the method, my mind has no peace unless I have written at the end of the day nearly two thousand words. Between breakfast and lunch I manage five hundred words, and while the rice on the stove is cooking, a couple of hundred, and after lunch once again till six, with interruptions to read letters and reply to them, or to go out for a walk along the mountain path, or meet and talk to one or other of my many friends here".

The workmanlike air, modesty and candour of this passage draw the picture of Narayan as man and writer. He is a dedicated writer, not to any ideology in respect of social uplift, but to his vocation. He presents like an intellectual

with distinct individuality which preserves his originality.

His limitations are: he is confined to a limited range beyond which he is unable to depict depths of pathos that move the very inner fibre; he is good at under-tones but bold and dramatic flashes have no place in his fiction, he seems to have no experience of the drags of poverty, the crushing load of misery, the helplessness and hopelessness springing from communal animosity and the like. That's why his fiction is one-sided, depending solely on the action and reactions of the individual, and subsequent repercussions which force him to recoil into the bower of beatitude. But none is free from limitations. Despite these limitations Narayan is the exquisite master of the art of story telling.

ards - it attains artistic excellence and serves the humanity in different ways, sometimes giving pure delight and at times improving the society. Literature that is recognized as great by its universal appeal and total avoidance of narrowness in approach, consists of beauty and serves the interest of humanity. Beauty and humanism are the two characteristics of every great literature, and Narayan's fiction keeps a subtle balance between the two. That is to say, there is a balance, harmony and order between Narayan's sense of beauty and humanism. Inspite of the fact that he does not assert to eradicate the caste, he suggests to deal with it more cogently and turn towards the eternal India of the times of the Vedas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharat.

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The modernity brought about by new ideas, industrial progress, political upheaval and technological amelioration is bringing the world closely together as an organic whole. But this modernity is only the one side of a coin, the reality lies on the other side, in the ancient world of order, balance and harmony, without which the whole progress would eventually lead to disorder and disharmony. Narayan's novels throw a great deal of light on this fact. Shelley declares that power like a devastating pestilence pollutes whatever it touches, but Narayan suggests that worldly power controlled by spiritual power would neither pollute nor end in devastation. Narayan's is a clarion call to the suffering humanity, and here lies his sense of balance which is the best contribution to bring the world together as and organic whole. As life is an endless struggle between the forces of evil and good, it is the forces of good which triumph ultimately and convince humanity that the forces of evil are temporary and hence they are bound to be eventually defeated.

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